

# **‘Mercy Gramercy’**

## **A Study of Henry of Grosmont**

**by  
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as part of the requirements for the degree of  
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*Par trois choses me puisse jeo resonablement escuser de defautes de cest livre: l'une est qe jeo n'ai pas le sen de moy entremettre de haut chose; l'autre si est, si le franceis ne soit pas bon, jeo doie estre escusee, pur ceo qe jeo sui engleis et n'ai pas moelt hauntee le franceis; la tierce chose est qe jeo ne sui pas bon escryvene, car unqes ne l'apris forsqe tard, de moy meismes. Siqe par ces trois chosez il me semble qe jeo puisse escuser les defautez de cest livre et moy.*

— Henry of Grosmont, *Livre de Seyntz Medicines*, p. 239.

I have three excuses to offer for the defects of this book: I am not qualified for such work – I am English and have had but little acquaintance with French – I am a poor writer, having learnt late and by myself.

— Marginal gloss from the Arnould edition.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

<i>CPL</i>	<i>Calendar of Papal Letters</i>
<i>CPR</i>	<i>Calendar of Patent Rolls</i>
<i>DNB</i>	<i>Dictionary of National Biography</i>
<i>GEC</i>	G.E. Cokayne, <i>The Complete Peerage of England, Scotland, Ireland, etc.</i>
<i>LC</i>	Geoffroi de Charny's <i>Livre de Chevalerie</i>
<i>LSM</i>	Henry of Grosmont's <i>Livre de Seyntz Medicines</i>

## INTRODUCTION

This thesis concerns Henry of Grosmont, first duke of Lancaster, focusing in particular on his 1354 *Livre de Seyntz Medicines* (Book of Holy Medicines), a protracted penitential allegory in which he characterizes his soul as a wounded, infected body.

Grosmont deserves attention for several reasons. For a start, he was one of the fourteenth century's most prominent historical characters. An outlying member of the Plantagenet dynasty, he was born around 1310. At his death in 1361 he was England's wealthiest, highest-ranking aristocrat and, like his grandfather Edmund, an individual 'of European stature'.<sup>1</sup> The king and Black Prince excepted, he was England's most important commander of the early Hundred Years War. He was active for thirty years as king's lieutenant, heading English armies or diplomatic missions and governing Aquitaine and Brittany. Most notably, he preserved Aquitaine from French seizure in the 1340s.<sup>2</sup> In European terms, therefore, he was a significant figure.

Edward III rewarded these services with titles and territories, increasing Grosmont's importance within England.<sup>3</sup> Lancaster was raised

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<sup>1</sup> J.R. Maddicott, *Thomas of Lancaster 1307-1322. A Study in the Reign of Edward II* (London, 1970), p. 2. The citation refers to Edmund.

<sup>2</sup> The standard biography is that of Fowler: K. Fowler, *The King's Lieutenant: Henry of Grosmont, First Duke of Lancaster, 1310-1361* (London, 1969). This is the only full-scale work devoted to Grosmont. Arnould's study of Grosmont's *Seyntz Medicines* includes a 70-page treatment of Grosmont's career based mainly on chronicle accounts: E.J. Arnould, *Etude sur le Livre des Saintes Médecines du duc Henri de Lancastre, accompagnée d'extraits du texte* (Paris, 1948), pp. lx-lxv. Tavormina and the *DNB* provide good summaries of his life: M.T. Tavormina, 'Henry of Lancaster. *The Book of Holy Medicines* (*Le Livre de Seyntz Medicines*)', in Bartlett, A.C. and T.H. Bestul (eds.), *Cultures of Piety. Medieval English Devotional Literature in Translation* (Ithaca, 1999), pp. 19-26; *DNB* 26, pp. 572-576.

<sup>3</sup> Fowler, *op. cit.*, *passim*, esp. 172-173. Details of Edward's grants to Grosmont can be found in: J. Bothwell, 'Edward III and the 'New Nobility': largesse and Limitation in Fourteenth-Century England', *English Historical Review*, 112 (1997), pp. 1138-1140.

from a county to a duchy in 1351 and given quasi-autonomous palatinate status.<sup>4</sup> Grosmont thus became the second duke in England's history. His younger daughter Blanche married Edward's son John of Gaunt (the elder, Maud, having previously married William, son of Emperor Lewis of Bavaria).<sup>5</sup> Grosmont thereby achieved posthumous fame as a founder of the Lancastrian dynasty when Gaunt's son became Henry IV.

If Grosmont's career is interesting so is his interior life. His *Seyntz Medicines*, the only known penitential work by an English aristocrat of the period, yields insights into his mentality. Composed in Anglo-Norman French it describes Grosmont's sins, begging Christ to cure his diseased soul.<sup>6</sup> Rediscovered in the 1930s, the *Seyntz Medicines* has been praised extravagantly by scholars in various fields. Pantin found it 'one of the most remarkable religious works of the fourteenth century';<sup>7</sup> Tanqueray thought it 'possibly the *chef-d'œuvre* of Anglo-Norman literature in the fourteenth century', a verdict periodically quoted and endorsed.<sup>8</sup> Social histories often cite it for the detail it supplies on life in the period,<sup>9</sup> while

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<sup>4</sup> GEC VII, p. 402 including note g. Fowler (*op. cit.*, 173-174) outlines what Lancaster's palatinate status entailed.

<sup>5</sup> For Maud's marriage, see Fowler, *op. cit.*, 117-121; for Blanche's, *ibid.*, pp. 175. See also M. Anderson, 'Blanche, Duchess of Lancaster', *Modern Philology*, 45 (1948), pp. 153-154.

<sup>6</sup> The essential works on the *Seyntz Medicines* are by E.J.F. Arnould: an initial appraisal following its rediscovery: 'Henry of Lancaster and His "Livre des Seintes Medicines"', *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*, 21 (1937), pp. 352-386; an edition of the text: *Le Livre de Seyntz Medicines. The unpublished devotional treatise of Henry of Lancaster*, Anglo-Norman Texts 2, ed. Arnould (Oxford, 1940); a full-length study of the work (*Etude sur le Livre des Saintes Médecines du duc Henri de Lancastre, accompagnée d'extraits du texte* (Paris, 1948)). The work is considered in M.D. Legge, *Anglo-Norman Literature and its Background* (Oxford, 1963), pp. 216-220. A catalogue description can be found in R.J. Dean and M.B.M. Boulton: *Anglo-Norman Literature. A Guide to Texts and Manuscripts. Anglo-Norman Text Society, occasional publications series 3* (London, 1999), pp. 378-379.

<sup>7</sup> W.A. Pantin, *The English Church in the Fourteenth Century* (Cambridge, 1955), p. 231.

<sup>8</sup> F.J. Tanqueray, 'Review: *Le Livre de Seyntz Medicines, unpublished devotional treatise of Henry of Lancaster* edited by E.J. Arnould (Anglo-Norman Text Society)', *Medium Ævum*, 10 (1941), p. 116. For endorsements, Legge, *op. cit.*, p. 220; W. Rothwell, 'Henry of Lancaster and Geoffrey Chaucer: Anglo-French and Middle English in Fourteenth-Century England', *Modern Language Review*, 99 (2004), p. 319.

<sup>9</sup> For instance: C.M. Woolgar, *The Great Household in Late Medieval England* (London, 1999), pp. 127, 167 and 170.



for Rothwell it makes Grosmont ‘an important figure as far as the linguistic history of England is concerned’.<sup>10</sup> Evidently, as scholarly source-material, the work has all-round potential.

Grosmont, in short, has a double claim on scholarly attention, as one of the major historical figures of his day and for having left a key to his thinking capable of shedding light on his actions. This should make him invaluable to historians.

However, historical scholars have tended to neglect him. Cokayne remarked that it was ‘curious’ that John of Gaunt should be so well known when his ‘brilliant predecessor’ had been forgotten.<sup>11</sup> This was in 1910, before the *Seyntz Medicines* resurfaced. Since then not much has changed, however. Grosmont has inspired only one biography, that of Kenneth Fowler, which did not appear until 1969. Little historical work on him has been published since.

Fowler’s biography excluded, since the *Livre*’s reappearance studies have mainly investigated Grosmont’s authorial persona. Researchers have examined various aspects of the work’s devotional content,<sup>12</sup> highlighted its potential for students of Anglo-Norman French,<sup>13</sup> proposed links between the *Seyntz Medicines* and *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*,<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Rothwell, *loc. cit.*

<sup>11</sup> GEC VII, p. 410.

<sup>12</sup> R.M.T., Hill, ‘A Soldier’s Devotions’, *Studies in Church History*, 17 (1981), pp. 77-83; C. Batt, D. Renevey and C. Whitehead, ‘Domesticity and Medieval Devotional Literature’, *Leeds Studies in English*, 36 (2005), pp. 196-250. Religious studies prior to Fowler are: Pantin, *op. cit.*, pp. 131-133; R.W. Ackerman, ‘The Traditional Background of Henry of Lancaster’s *Livre*’, *L’Esprit Créateur*, 2 (1962), pp. 114-118.

<sup>13</sup> Rothwell, *op. cit.*

<sup>14</sup> Thiébaux first connected the two works, proposing Grosmont as a model for Sir Bertilak (M. Thiébaux, ‘Sir Gawain, the Fox Hunt, and Henry of Lancaster’, *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen*, 71 [1970], pp. 469-479, esp. pp. 478-479). Cooke and Boulton argue that he was the Gawain-poet’s patron (W.G. Cooke and D’A.J.D. Boulton, ‘Sir Gawain and the Green Knight: a Poem for Henry of Grosmont?’, *Medium Ævum*, 68 [1999], pp. 42-54.). Ingledew regards Grosmont as a real-life analogue of Sir Gawain (F. Ingledew, *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight and the Order of the Garter* [Notre Dame,

examined its representation of the body<sup>15</sup> and announced the location of a new manuscript.<sup>16</sup> A forthcoming article treats the translation of puns in Grosmont's *Livre*.<sup>17</sup> These publications privilege Grosmont's authorial side or focus exclusively on the book. Research from a historical standpoint is typically specialist or relates only tangentially to Grosmont himself.<sup>18</sup>

Fowler's biography remains the definitive work. Its strengths and weaknesses are therefore influential. A military historian, Fowler set Grosmont in the context of the Hundred Years War, foregrounding his political exploits, downplaying his other aspects. His 221-page biography contains just over three pages devoted to the *Livre*, at the close of a ten-page chapter on Grosmont's religion, itself situated near the end of the work.<sup>19</sup> This gives a false impression of the *Livre's* historical value. Rothwell, for example, doubted its use to historians, it being merely 'an extensive exposition of the author's spiritual condition in later life'.<sup>20</sup>

Grosmont-related publications in the decade after Fowler's book show evidence of a more historically minded attitude, with two attempts

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Indiana, 2006], p. 200).

<sup>15</sup> A. Taylor, 'Reading the Body in *Le Livre de Seyntz Medecines*', *Essays in Medieval Studies*, 11 (1994), pp. 103-118.

<sup>16</sup> J. Krochalis, and R.J. Dean, 'Henry of Lancaster's *Livre de Seyntz Medicines*: New Fragments of an Anglo-Norman Work', *The National Library of Wales Journal*, 18 (1973), pp. 87-94.

<sup>17</sup> The work will appear in *Medieval Translator* 10. For reference details, see Batt, *et al.*, *op cit.*, p. 245, note 41.

<sup>18</sup> Thus Elias describes coins issued by Grosmont as lord of Bergerac: E.R.D. Elias, 'The Coinage of Bergerac 1347-1361', *British Numismatic Journal*, 49 (1979), pp. 56-73. Fleury presents and discusses a contemporary account of one of Grosmont's campaigns: D.A. Fleury, 'La chevauchée du duc de Lancastre en Normandie centrale en 1356', *Cahiers Léopold Delisle*, 27 (1978), pp. 113-127. Perroy (writing before Fowler) does the same with letters to Grosmont by Cardinal Guy de Boulogne: É. Perroy, 'Quatre lettres du cardinal Guy de Boulogne (1352-1354)', *Revue du Nord*, 36 (1954), pp. 62-72.

<sup>19</sup> Fowler, *op. cit.*, chapter 15, 'A Devout Layman', pp. 187-196, with pp. 193-196 relating to the book.

<sup>20</sup> Rothwell, *op. cit.*, pp. 317-18.

around 1980 to link his book and life experience.<sup>21</sup> However, a ten-year hiatus then ensued, with no publications whatsoever.

Since then the focus has been resolutely on his book. Even in the case of Grosmont the author, despite the superlatives lavished on his *Livre*, only in the last decade has the level of publication matched the praise.<sup>22</sup> Currently, however, articles on Grosmont are appearing with growing regularity and, though there has been no full translation of the *Livre*, Dr Catherine Batt is preparing one.<sup>23</sup>

Another effort at bridging the divide between the political actor and religious author seems required. In the scholarly literature Grosmont's two personæ coexist largely independently. While this arises partly from what Rothwell labels scholarly 'compartmentalization',<sup>24</sup> in some respects it follows contemporary sources. Chronicle depictions of Grosmont as a model knight conflict sharply, seemingly irreconcilably, with his spiritual self-portrait.<sup>25</sup> Researchers, like Fowler, tend to follow this precedent, addressing one or other aspect of Grosmont rather than attempt a holistic approach.

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<sup>21</sup> Labarge situated Grosmont's book in the context of his life. M.W. Labarge, 'Henry of Lancaster and *Le Livre de Seyntz Medicines*', *Florilegium*, 2 (1980), pp. 183-191; Hill (*op. cit.*) set his religious views against his military career. 1970s articles with a historical emphasis are Elias, *op. cit.*, Fleury *op. cit.* and, to some extent, Thiébaux, *op. cit.*

<sup>22</sup> Articles published in the last ten years: Cooke and Boulton, *op. cit.*; Rothwell, *op. cit.*; Batt *et. al.*, *op. cit.* Other works relevant to the *Seyntz Medicines*: Tavormina's partial translation (*op. cit.*, pp. 19-40); an entry in Dean and Boulton (*loc. cit.*). A searchable version of Arnould's edition of the text has been placed online: Henry of Grosmont, *Le livre de Seyntz Medicines* (The unpublished devotional treatise of Henry of Lancaster) Arnould, É.J. (ed.), Anglo-Norman Hub <<http://www.anglo-norman.net/texts/>> [accessed 30/01/2007]. There have been two short biographies. Both, however, are digests of existing information and belong to larger projects: an eight-page introduction to Tavormina's translation (*op. cit.*, pp. 19-26) and Grosmont's *DNB* entry (vol. 26, pp. 572-576). Batt's article on puns is forthcoming.

<sup>23</sup> Aside from Tavormina's partial translation (*op. cit.*), Arnould, 'Henry of Lancaster', translates a number of lengthy passages: on treacle (pp. 370-373, translation of *LSM* pp. 56-58) and on foxhunting (pp. 373-382, trans. of *LSM* pp. 103-115).

<sup>24</sup> Rothwell, *op. cit.*, pp. 317-318.

<sup>25</sup> Arnould, 'Henry of Lancaster', p. 364; Ingledew, *op. cit.*, p. 199.

Since his *Livre* consists of a medical allegory, a medical analogy seems fitting to describe his situation. Anatomical textbooks sometimes feature illustrations of humanoid figures called homunculi. ‘The homunculus,’ states one text, ‘is a distorted picture of the body, with the various parts having a size proportional to the area of the cerebral cortex devoted to their control.’<sup>26</sup> Thus sensory homunculi, for instance, intended to convey the relative concentrations of nerve endings in different body parts, have enlarged hands, lips and tongues, reflecting the high frequency of nerves in these organs, but comparatively stunted torsos.<sup>27</sup>

Historical figures might be said to resemble homunculi in some respects. The apparent ‘size’ of a given aspect of somebody’s character tends to reflect as much the amount of scholarly attention devoted to it as its real importance in the lived life of the individual. The Grosmont ‘homunculus’, the body of scholarly literature about him, is acquiring an inflated literary and religious side, while his outward, political side shrinks proportionately. A distorted picture appears to be emerging by default.

Obviously both aspects of his life were important. Grosmont led a remarkably active life but also wrote a book attesting a pronounced contemplative streak. It would be good for these two halves to be tied better than they have been.

This thesis sets out to do so. It has several goals. Firstly, it adds, from a specifically historical standpoint, to the existing scholarship on

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<sup>26</sup> R.S. Snell, *Clinical Neuroanatomy for Medical Students. Second edition* (Boston and Toronto, 1987), p. 365.

<sup>27</sup> ‘Penfield’s homunculus’, the original, classic diagram, is reproduced widely, for instance in A.R. Crossman and D. Neary, *Neuroanatomy. An Illustrated Colour Text* (Edinburgh, 1995), p. 111. The Natural History Museum, London, holds impressive models of sensory and motor homunculi. Images can be viewed at the NHM website: The Natural History Museum, London, 2005: <<http://piclib.nhm.ac.uk/piclib/www>> [accessed 07/12/06].

Grosmont. Secondly, it aims to counterbalance Fowler's external portrait, using the *Seyntz Medicines* to get a 'view from the inside' and treating Grosmont's internal and external portraits as components of a greater whole. How are they linked? How do they interact? The thesis also sets out to put Grosmont in historical context. How does he compare with contemporaries?

These general aims are addressed in three chapters. Chapter one, a study of Grosmont's formation and identity, serves as an introduction to his life. It presents his antecedents and personal history, relating his experiences to the person he subsequently became. The objective is to address in more detail than did Fowler the role of background and experience in moulding Grosmont's identity.

Chapter two examines Grosmont's chivalric identity. In Europe's chivalric fraternity he was admired as a paragon.<sup>28</sup> However, his *Seyntz Medicines* can be understood as a confession of knightly failure. Can these versions of him be reconciled? Furthermore, what are we to make of Fowler's statement that Grosmont's conduct of warfare had 'curiously archaic features'?<sup>29</sup> The French found England's new tactics in the Hundred Years War dishonourable. Are Grosmont's high reputation and old-fashioned style of warfare to be taken as implying that his chivalric behaviour was more old-style French than English?

The third chapter examines Grosmont's religious identity. One contemporary noted that, though valiant in his youth, he became very

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<sup>28</sup> For a range of contemporary opinions, see the citations in Arnould, 'Henry of Lancaster', p. 364, note 1.

<sup>29</sup> Fowler, *op. cit.*, p. 220.

strictly religious before he died.<sup>30</sup> When and why did his devotion intensify? How did it manifest itself? What tendencies in fourteenth-century thinking did it reflect? How did his piety compare with that of others? This chapter addresses such issues.

The most important primary source considered in this study is Grosmont's own *Seyntz Medicines*. What was it? Under what circumstances was it written?

Grosmont asserts that it was 'begun and finished' in 1354<sup>31</sup> (i.e. between 25 March 1354 and 24 March 1355 in modern terms).<sup>32</sup> The first half, at least, seems to have been written quickly around April. Around the work's middle Grosmont mentions that it is Easter Sunday,<sup>33</sup> which in 1354 fell on 13 April.<sup>34</sup> Thus the first half was mainly written between 25 March and 13 April, at a rate of five pages a day on average. It seems to consist of 'the short, daily entries made by a harried man'.<sup>35</sup>

For Grosmont this was a period of unexpected idleness. An invasion of Normandy that he had been to lead had been cancelled at the last moment, while the king did not wish him to attend diplomatic negotiations happening in France.<sup>36</sup> Noblemen who wrote books often did so in captivity,<sup>37</sup> perhaps as alternative entertainment was unavailable.

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<sup>30</sup> Sir Thomas Gray, cited by Arnould, 'Henry of Lancaster', p. 364, note 1.

<sup>31</sup> 'Comencee et parfaite': *LSM*, p. 244, lines 7-9.

<sup>32</sup> R.I. Poole, 'The Beginning of the Year in the Middle Ages', in Poole, A.L. (ed.), *Studies in Chronology and History by Reginald I. Poole* (Oxford, 1934), p. 14.

<sup>33</sup> *LSM* p. 98, lines 14-16.

<sup>34</sup> C.R. Cheney, *A Handbook of Dates for Students of British History*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (Cambridge, 2000), p. 229.

<sup>35</sup> Citation from Taylor, *op. cit.*, pp. 110. Other scholars typically concur: eg. Batt *et. al.*, *op. cit.*, p. 220; Arnould, 'Henry of Lancaster', p. 367.

<sup>36</sup> For this period, see Fowler, *op. cit.*, pp. 123-132.

<sup>37</sup> R.J. Moll, 'The *Scalacronica* of Sir Thomas Gray of Heton', in Moll, R.J., *Before Malory. Reading Arthur in Later Medieval England* (Toronto, Buffalo and London, 2003), p. 41.

Grosmont's circumstances seem analogous. He wished, he states, to 'make use of times which were wont to be idle in the service of God'.<sup>38</sup> Whether the whole book was written at this time is unclear; his remark ('begun and finished' in 1354) is ambiguous. The rest of his year was occupied with a diplomatic mission to Avignon, where he stayed in the Papal palace.<sup>39</sup> While busy, this may have been a propitious situation for devotional writing.

The *Livre* is in Anglo-Norman, the dialect of Old French used in England.<sup>40</sup> It has two parts plus a prologue. In the prologue Grosmont offers various reasons why he should both plead for Christ's mercy (*crier mercy*) and give Him great thanks (*rendre grante mercy*) for the favours

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See also R.W. Kaeuper, 'Geoffroi de Charny and His Book', in Kaeuper, R.W. and E. Kennedy (eds.), *The Book of Chivalry of Geoffroi de Charny* (Philadelphia, 1996), p. 22.

<sup>38</sup> *LSM*, p. 240, lines 3-5: 'la primer chose si feust une delit qe me prist de occuper un temps qe me soleit estre ocious en ascune service de Dieux'. Translation: Arnould, 'Henry of Lancaster', p. 367.

<sup>39</sup> For details, see Fowler, *op. cit.*, pp 132-147.

<sup>40</sup> Anglo-Norman is a young and rapidly-evolving subdiscipline of French philology. For the classic scholarly view of the dialect, see Vising and Pope: J. Vising, *Anglo-Norman Language and Literature* (London, 1923); M. Pope, *From Latin to Modern French with Especial Consideration of Anglo-Norman: Phonology and Morphology* (Manchester, 1952), pp. 420-426. This view is largely superseded. For the revisionist account, see the many articles of Rothwell, particularly: W. Rothwell, 'Stratford Attie Bowe and Paris', *Modern Language Review*, 80 (1985), pp. 37-54; *idem*, 'The "Faus Franceis d'Angleterre". Later Anglo-Norman', in Short, I. (ed.), *Anglo-Norman Anniversary Essays. Anglo-Norman Text Society, Occasional Publications Series, 2*. (London, 1993), pp. 309-326; *idem*, 'Playing "Follow My Leader" in Anglo-Norman Studies', *French Language Studies*, 6 (1996), pp. 177-210. For a bibliography of Rothwell's works to 1997: S. Gregory and D.A. Trotter, 'Bibliography of the Writings of William Rothwell', in Gregory, S. and D.A. Trotter (eds.), *De Mot En Mot. Aspects of Medieval Linguistics. Essays in Honour of William Rothwell* (Cardiff, 1997), pp. xi-xiv. See also: D. Trotter, 'Not As Eccentric As It Looks: Anglo-French and French French', *Forum for Modern Language Studies*, 39 (2003), pp. 425-438. For modern scholarship sympathetic to the traditional approach, see Kibbee: D.A. Kibbee, *For To Speke Frenche Trewely. The French language in England, 1000-1600: its status, description and instruction. Amsterdam studies in the theory and history of linguistic science, vol. 60* (Amsterdam and Philadelphia, 1991), pp. 5-57; *idem*, 'Historical Perspectives on the Place of Anglo-Norman in the History of the French Language', *French Studies*, 54 (2000), pp. 137-153; *idem*, 'Emigrant Languages and Acculturation: The Case of Anglo-French', in H.F. Nielsen and L. Schøsler (eds.), *The Origins and Development of Emigrant Languages. Proceedings from the Second Rasmus Rask Colloquium, Odense University, November 1994* (Odense, 1996), pp. 1-20. For overviews of the discipline, see Dean for the early period, Hunt for the later: R.J. Dean, 'A Fair Field Needing Folk: Anglo-Norman', *Publications of the Modern Language Association of America*, 69 (1954), pp. 965-978; T. Hunt, 'Anglo-Norman: Past and Future', in Goyens, M. and W. Verbeke (eds.), *The Dawn of the Written Vernacular in Western Europe (Mediaevalia Lovanensia, Series 1: Studia 33)* (Leuven, 2003), pp. 379-389.

heaped on him.<sup>41</sup> This pun on the word *mercy* gave the work its medieval name: *Mercy Gramercy*.<sup>42</sup> Most of the work adopts a medical allegory. Grosmont is a man afflicted with seven wounds, in his ears, eyes, nose, mouth, hands, feet and heart. Each is infected with all seven deadly sins.<sup>43</sup> This provides the book with its organizing principle: Grosmont's confessions explain how each sin relates to each 'wound' (i.e. body part). He addresses, as in a prayer, Christ and the Virgin Mary, his doctor and nurse. In part two he outlines the treatment needed to cure his diseased wounds. Capgrave took these two halves as representing the 'mercy' and 'gramercy' sections of Grosmont's pun.<sup>44</sup>

There are two complete manuscripts of the *Seyntz Medicines* plus a partial text of part two.<sup>45</sup> Each contains words omitted in the others, suggesting each was transcribed independently from an original.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> *LSM*, pp. 1-7, esp. p. 1, lines 9-11.

<sup>42</sup> Arnould, *Etude*, p. lxxiii; *Johannis Capgrave. Liber de Illustribus Henricis*, ed. F.C. Hingeston Rolls Series, 7 (London, 1858), pp. 163-164.

<sup>43</sup> For Grosmont's initial statement of the allegory, see *LSM*, pp. 7-8; for his summary of the work's contents: *LSM*, pp. 241-244.

<sup>44</sup> Capgrave, *loc. cit.*

<sup>45</sup> For manuscript details: Dean and Boulton, *loc. cit.*; Arnould, 'Henry of Lancaster', pp. 352-254; *idem*, *Etude*, pp. lxxvii-lxxii; Krochalis and Dean, *op. cit.*

<sup>46</sup> Arnould, 'Henry of Lancaster', p. 353; Krochalis and Dean, *op. cit.*, p. 88.



## CHAPTER ONE

Around 1310, Henry of Grosmont was born at Grosmont castle in Wales.<sup>1</sup> He died in 1361 at Leicester and was buried alongside his parents in the collegiate church he had established there.<sup>2</sup>

The translocation to Leicester was symptomatic of the dramatic change in the family fortunes. Grosmont belonged to a downwardly mobile branch of the Plantagenet line: his grandfather, Edmund Crouchback earl of Lancaster, had been Henry III's second son; Edmund's own second son was Grosmont's father Henry. In 1310 Grosmont's uncle Thomas owned the bulk of Edmund's former estates and titles, including the counties of Lancaster and Leicester. His father held a collection of outlying lordships centred on the Welsh marches, plus two French estates inherited from a dead younger brother.<sup>3</sup>

Grosmont's burial at Leicester indicated the turnaround in family affairs that had taken place in the interim. Endangered by the era's turbulent politics in his formative years, Grosmont died Steward of England, the realm's wealthiest nobleman and second duke, the lord of Bergerac in Aquitaine, where he had the unprecedented right to

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<sup>1</sup> E.J. Arnould, *Etude sur le Livre des Saintes Médecines du duc Henri de Lancastre, accompagnée d'extraits du texte* (Paris, 1948), p. ix, inc. note 1, based on remarks in Grosmont's *Livre: LSM*, p. 94 lines 8-10. Past estimates of Grosmont's birth at ~1300 (eg. GEC, VII, p. 401) were inaccurate.

<sup>2</sup> For Grosmont's death: K. Fowler, *The King's Lieutenant: Henry of Grosmont, First Duke of Lancaster, 1310-1361* (London, 1969), pp. 216-218.

<sup>3</sup> The Lancastrian possessions are well documented. For Edmund's estates, see W.E. Rhodes, 'Edmund, Earl of Lancaster. Part I.', *English Historical Review*, 10 (1895), pp. 28-40. For Thomas, see: J.R. Maddicott, *Thomas of Lancaster 1307-1322. A Study in the Reign of Edward II* (London, 1970), pp. 8-39. For Grosmont's father Henry, see *DNB*, 26, p. 569. For Grosmont himself, see Fowler, *op. cit.*, pp. 172-186. For their fate under John of Gaunt see: S. Walker, *The Lancastrian Affinity, 1361-1399. Oxford Historical Monographs* (Oxford, 1990), *passim*.

mint coins in his own name, the earl of Moray in Scotland and, through his royal son-in-law John of Gaunt, the future grandfather of Henry IV.<sup>4</sup> Following Thomas of Lancaster's failed rebellion against Edward II, Edmund's patrimony had largely devolved upon Grosmont.<sup>5</sup> St Mary Newarke, the family's resting-place in 1361, belonged in the new, more prestigious English territories once held by Thomas.

This chapter examines Grosmont's experiences and formation. What were the events of his life? How might these have affected his identity?

## Antecedents

Elaborate genealogical rolls attest the importance of ancestry to England's medieval aristocracy.<sup>6</sup> What was Grosmont's pedigree?

On his father's side, via Henry III, Grosmont could claim royal descent, not only from England's Norman and Angevin kings but also from Anglo-Saxon royalty, through Henry I's wife Matilda. However, since Henry's descendants had Continental spouses – Geoffrey of

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<sup>4</sup> For Grosmont's titles, see GEC, VII, pp. 401-410. For his wealth, see Fowler, *op. cit.*, pp. 175, 186. For his coinage rights in Bergerac, see E.R.D. Elias, 'The Coinage of Bergerac 1347-1361', *British Numismatic Journal*, 49 (1979), p. 56.

<sup>5</sup> For Thomas' rebellion, see Maddicott, *Thomas of Lancaster*, pp. 259-317. For the recuperation of the estates see *DNB* 26, p. 570; Fowler, *op. cit.*, pp. 24-25 *et passim*.

<sup>6</sup> O. de Laborderie, 'Les généalogies des rois d'Angleterre sur rouleaux manuscrits (milieu XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle-début XV<sup>e</sup> siècle). Conception, diffusion et fonctions', in Barthelemy, T. and M.-C. Pingaud (eds.), *La généalogie entre science et passion. Actes du 120<sup>e</sup> congrès national des sociétés historiques et scientifiques, Aix-en-Provence, 1997*. (Paris, 1997), pp. 181-199, esp. pp. 193-195. For genealogy's role in structuring medieval ideas of history, see G.M. Spiegel, 'Genealogy: Form and Function in Medieval Historiography', in Spiegel, G., *The Past as Text: the Theory and Practice of Medieval Historiography* (Baltimore, 1997), pp. 103-107. For the use of chivalric romance in establishing baronial genealogies, see R. Field, 'Romance in England, 1066-1400', in Wallace, D. (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Medieval English Literature* (Cambridge, 1999), pp. 161-162.

Anjou, Eleanor of Aquitaine, Isabella of Angoulême, Eleanor of Provence – Grosmont's paternal ancestry was mostly foreign, not local. His grandfather Edmund also married abroad. His wife Blanche, queen of Navarre by her first marriage, was daughter of Robert of Artois, son to Louis VIII of France and Blanche of Castile.<sup>7</sup> Through her, Grosmont had descent from French kings, including Charlemagne and Antenor, the supposed Trojan founder of the royal line.<sup>8</sup> Edmund himself had been designated king of Sicily by the Pope, although this scheme had ultimately miscarried.<sup>9</sup> Grosmont could therefore regard himself as descended from English, French, Castilian and even Navarrese or Sicilian royalty. On his father's side his roots were, therefore, complex and international.

His maternal pedigree had more local elements. His mother Maud was the daughter of a Welsh marcher lord, Sir Patrick de Chaworth of Kidwelly, and Isabel Beauchamp, the earl of Warwick's daughter.<sup>10</sup> The Chaworths originated in Sourches, Maine.<sup>11</sup> While they preserved their French connections well into the thirteenth

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<sup>7</sup> For the circumstances of the marriage: W.E. Rhodes, 'Edmund, Earl of Lancaster. Part II.', *English Historical Review*, 10 (1895), pp. 213-214. Blanche of Castile's genealogy can be seen on the inside cover of R. Pernoud, *Blanche of Castile* (London, 1975).

<sup>8</sup> For Trojan royal ancestry: A. Burguière, 'L'historiographie des origines de la France. Genèse d'un imaginaire national', *Annales: Histoire, Sciences Sociales*, 58 (2003), p. 44.

<sup>9</sup> *DNB* 17, pp. 756-757; Rhodes, 'Edmund. Part I', pp. 20-29.

<sup>10</sup> GEC, VII, p. 400-401.

<sup>11</sup> M.T.W. Payne and J.E. Payne, 'The Wall Inscriptions of Gloucester Cathedral Chapter House and the de Chaworths of Kempsford', *Transactions of the Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society*, 112 (1994), p. 93; L Chaworth Musters, 'Chaworth Family (1)', *Transactions of the Thoroton Society*, 7 (1903), placed online 06/09/2004.  
<<http://www.nottshistory.org.uk/articles/tts/tts1903/chaworth/chaworth1.htm>> [accessed 15/01/2007].

century,<sup>12</sup> some Chaworth wives, Gudrun de la Ferté for instance, had names suggesting mixed Anglo-Saxon and French heritage.<sup>13</sup> If, therefore, his paternal lineage was royal and international, on the maternal side Grosmont had local, baronial, possibly Anglo-Saxon ancestors.

Both sides, however, shared common features. One was crusading. In the 1270s various Chaworths, including Grosmont's grandfather, accompanied Edward I and Edmund to the Holy Land.<sup>14</sup> Edmund's crusading eagerness earned him the name Crouchback (crossed-back).<sup>15</sup> Robert of Artois died on crusade.<sup>16</sup> Grosmont himself went crusading in Spain, Prussia and, Capgrave asserts, almost everywhere.<sup>17</sup> Henry IV's Prussian crusade has been described as emulating his own.<sup>18</sup> Perhaps his own forebears inspired Grosmont himself.

Adherence to the Crown was another family trait. Edmund was unstintingly loyal to Henry III, during his baronial rebellion, then to

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<sup>12</sup> Payne and Payne, *op. cit.*, p. 100.

<sup>13</sup> For a family tree of Grosmont's maternal ancestors in the thirteenth century, see *ibid.*, p. 94.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 97.

<sup>15</sup> For Edmund's crusading enthusiasm, see *DNB* 17, p. 758.

<sup>16</sup> Pernoud, *op.cit.*, p. 271.

<sup>17</sup> Johannis Capgrave. *Liber de Illustribus Henricis*, ed. F.C. Hingeston, Rolls Series, 7 (London, 1858), p. 161. Scholars are sceptical of Capgrave's claims: Fowler, *op. cit.*, p. 26; E.J. Arnould, *Etude sur le Livre des Saintes Médecines du duc Henri de Lancastre, accompagnée d'extraits du texte* (Paris, 1948), p. xii. For Grosmont's crusade in Spain, see Fowler, *op. cit.*, pp. 45-47; A.S. Cook, *The Historical Background of Chaucer's Knight* (New York, 1966), pp. 61-68. This contains lengthy citations from Spanish chronicles. For Prussia, see *Knighton's Chronicle 1337-1396*, ed. G.H. Martin (Oxford, 1995), 110-113; Fowler, *op. cit.*, pp. 105-106; W. Urban, *The Teutonic Knights. A Military History* (London, 2003), p. 175.

<sup>18</sup> Fowler, *op. cit.*, p. 221; Cook, *op cit*, p. 43.

Edward I.<sup>19</sup> He received various confiscated estates in recompense.<sup>20</sup> The Chaworths too supported the king and not the barons. They later helped Edmund subdue Wales.<sup>21</sup> Grosmont's relations with Edward III, marked by ostentatious loyalty, continued the tradition. As guarantor of Edward's debts, he let the merchants of Malines hold him hostage for a year (1340);<sup>22</sup> his elder daughter Maud was married to cement a political alliance of Edward's;<sup>23</sup> he and Edward are said only once to have fallen out.<sup>24</sup> Edward's dealings with his barons were generally 'harmonious'<sup>25</sup> and Thomas of Lancaster perhaps provided a salutary bad example. Nonetheless, family history too may have had a bearing on Grosmont's behaviour. In Wales his Chaworth grandfather had loyally served his Plantagenet grandfather. Perhaps this internalized Grosmont's conception of service. His father and uncle, despite their father's loyalty to his brother, had not had quite the same experience.

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<sup>19</sup> *DNB* 17, pp. 758, 760; Maddicott, *Thomas of Lancaster*, pp. 1-2.

<sup>20</sup> *DNB* 17, pp. 257-258; Rhodes, 'Edmund. Part I', pp. 79-82.

<sup>21</sup> Payne and Payne, *op. cit.*, p. 97-98. Rhodes, 'Edmund. Part II', pp. 217-218.

<sup>22</sup> Fowler, *op. cit.*, pp. 35-37.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 117.

<sup>24</sup> Fowler, *op. cit.*, p. 123.

<sup>25</sup> Fowler, *op. cit.*, p. 219. For an examination of how Edward achieved good relations with his barons, see J. Bothwell, 'Edward III and the 'New Nobility': Largesse and Limitation in Fourteenth-Century England', *English Historical Review*, 112 (1997), pp. 1111-1140.

## Grosmont's Youth

Grosmont's early years, as with many medieval noblemen, are obscure.<sup>26</sup> Capgrave, in the fifteenth century, claimed he spent his youth crusading, though modern scholars doubt this.<sup>27</sup> When young, notes his book, he was tall, strong and handsome.<sup>28</sup> It also states that 'fear of being poor' inspired his covetous behaviour.<sup>29</sup> This was a penitential commonplace. However, in using it Grosmont may not have been totally inaccurate. In 1332, Edward III assigned him 500 marks from the Exchequer 'because his father had not yet made such provision for him as became his estate'.<sup>30</sup> Only in 1333 did Henry of Lancaster transfer certain estates to him.<sup>31</sup>

His level of education is likewise unclear.<sup>32</sup> He evidently wrote the *Seyntz Medicines* himself. In a closing apology for the work's defects he excuses his handwriting: 'I am not a good writer, for I only learned late and by myself'.<sup>33</sup> This suggests less poor education than an aspirational character. Ability to write, though useful, was not

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<sup>26</sup> Fowler, *op. cit.*, p. 26. For a comparable example, Maddicott *Thomas of Lancaster*, p. 3.

<sup>27</sup> Capgrave, *loc. cit.*, Fowler, *op. cit.*, p. 26; Arnould, *Etude*, p. xii.

<sup>28</sup> *LSM*, pp. 15 line 31–16 line 3.

<sup>29</sup> 'Doute-d'estre-poure': *LSM*, p. 43–46, esp. p. 43 lines 13–16.

<sup>30</sup> *CPR*, cited in Fowler, *op. cit.*, p. 28.

<sup>31</sup> Fowler, *op. cit.*, p. 28; *DNB* 26, pp. 571–572.

<sup>32</sup> For discussions of late medieval English literacy, see: K.B. McFarlane, 'The Education of the Nobility in Later Medieval England', in McFarlane, K.B., *The Nobility of Later Medieval England. The Ford Lectures for 1953 and Related Studies* (Oxford, 1973), pp. 228–247; M. Keen, *English Society in the Later Middle Ages, 1348–1500* (London, 1990), pp. 217–239. Likewise relevant is the essential work for the era directly preceding Grosmont's birth: M.T. Clanchy, *From Memory to Written Record. England 1066–1307*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (Oxford, 1993).

<sup>33</sup> 'Jeo ne sui pas bon escryvene, car unques ne l'apris forsque tard, de moy meismes': *LSM*, p. 239, l. 27–29.

essential for noblemen. People usually dictated to scribes.<sup>34</sup> Monks alone typically wrote themselves, to demonstrate humility.<sup>35</sup> Given the *Seyntz Medicines*' stress on humility, this perhaps explains Grosmont's action. We need not even believe his handwriting was bad: the apology forms part of a ritual disclaimer of the work's unworthiness, 'mock modesty' customary in medieval literature and not to be trusted.<sup>36</sup> Grosmont also excused his feeble intellect and poor Anglo-Norman French.<sup>37</sup> Modern scholars commend both.<sup>38</sup> The work's autograph copy has not survived to show his handwriting;<sup>39</sup> however, having written a lengthy book itself demonstrates skill.<sup>40</sup> His apology draws attention to this.

Like other English aristocrats, as a child Grosmont was probably taught French by his mother.<sup>41</sup> If so, since his Chaworth forebears were neighbours of the Mountchenesys,<sup>42</sup> perhaps she used Walter de Bibbesworth's widely diffused *Tretiz*, composed in the thirteenth

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<sup>34</sup> Clanchy, *op. cit.*, pp. 125-126, 247; McFarlane, *op. cit.*, p. 239.

<sup>35</sup> Clanchy, *op. cit.*, p. 126.

<sup>36</sup> For the citation, in the context of the *Seyntz Medicines*: M.D. Legge, *Anglo-Norman Literature and its Background* (Oxford, 1963), pp. 217-218. For the classic treatment of such apologies: E.R. Curtius, *English Literature and the Latin Middle Ages* (London, 1953), pp. 83-85. For Anglo-Norman manifestations of the phenomenon: W. Rothwell, 'Playing 'Follow My Leader' in Anglo-Norman Studies', *French Language Studies*, 6 (1996), pp. 185-194. For Grosmont's case in particular: Rothwell, 'Henry of Lancaster and Geoffrey Chaucer: Anglo-French and Middle English in Fourteenth-Century England', *Modern Language Review*, 99 (2004), p. 325.

<sup>37</sup> *LSM*, p. 239, l. 22-30.

<sup>38</sup> For Grosmont's intellect: McFarlane, *op. cit.*, pp. 46-47. For his language: Rothwell, 'Henry of Lancaster', pp. 325-327 *et passim*; E.J.F. Arnould, 'Henry of Lancaster and His "Livre des Seintes Medicines"', *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*, 21 (1937), p. 386; Tanqueray, F.J., 'Review: *Le Livre de Seyntz Medicines, unpublished devotional treatise of Henry of Lancaster* edited by E.J. Arnould (Anglo-Norman Text Society)', *Medium Ævum*, 10 (1941), p. 116.

<sup>39</sup> Arnould, 'Henry of Lancaster', p. 353, note 4.

<sup>40</sup> Legge, *op. cit.*, p. 218.

<sup>41</sup> W. Rothwell, 'The Teaching of French in Medieval England', *Modern Language Review*, 63 (1968), pp. 37-46; Keen, *English Society*, p. 223.

<sup>42</sup> Payne and Payne, *op. cit.*, p. 97.

century to help Dyonise de Mountechensi teach her offspring.<sup>43</sup> His *Livre* is in French, which remained England's elite written vernacular.<sup>44</sup> Again he protests inadequacy: 'if the French is not good I must be excused, for I am English and have not much haunted the French language'.<sup>45</sup> Again this can be discounted. Medieval authors customarily excused their rustic style.<sup>46</sup> Writers in Anglo-Norman specifically deplored their Englishness: the French was bad because he/she had never visited Paris.<sup>47</sup> Grosmont, who had, claims not to have frequented the language instead. This is disingenuous. His French was remarkably fine, which, given his lengthy stays on the Continent, presumably reflected familiarity with the language. French royal power, expansionary from the late twelfth century, had strengthened the authority of Parisian French (*francien*).<sup>48</sup> *Francien* sneers at provincial dialects and a defensive provincial reaction accompanied this.<sup>49</sup> Apologies like Grosmont's reflect a 'cultural cringe' rather than real deficiencies.

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<sup>43</sup> W. Rothwell, 'The Teaching of French', p. 38.

<sup>44</sup> Keen, *English Society*, p. 223.

<sup>45</sup> 'Si le françois ne soit pas bon, jeo doie estre escusee, pur ceo qe jeo sui engleis et n'ai pas moelt hauntee le françois': *LSM*, p. 239, l. 25-27.

<sup>46</sup> Curtius, *loc. cit.*

<sup>47</sup> For examples of such apologies, see citations in: J. Vising, *Anglo-Norman Language and Literature* (London, 1923), pp. 20-21, 26; M. Pope, *From Latin to modern French with especial consideration of Anglo-Norman: phonology and morphology* (Manchester, 1952), p. 425. For treatments of the issue: W. Rothwell, 'Stratford Atte Bowe and Paris', *Modern Language Review*, 80 (1985), pp. 37-42; Rothwell 'Playing 'Follow My Leader'', *loc. cit.*

<sup>48</sup> For discussions, see: M. Fumaroli, 'The Genius of the French Language', in Nora, P. and L.D. Kritzman (eds.), *Realms of Memory: Rethinking the French Past, III* (New York, 1996), pp. 558-563; S. Lusignan, 'L'Administration royale et la langue française aux XIII<sup>e</sup> et XIV<sup>e</sup> siècles', in Goyens, M. and W. Verbeke (eds.), *The Dawn of the Written Vernacular in Western Europe (Mediaevalia Lovanensia, Series 1: Studia 33)* (Leuven, 2003), pp. 51-52.

<sup>49</sup> For Anglo-Norman defensiveness see note 47. For non-Anglo-Norman equivalents, plus Parisian sneers, see Fumaroli, *op. cit.*, pp. 559-560. For French ridicule of Anglo-



The *Seyntz Medicines* shows no proof of Latin literacy. Its opening and closing Latin sentences are scribal additions.<sup>50</sup> Although Grosmont asks his readers to say ‘three Paternosters and three Ave Marias’ for him,<sup>51</sup> this simply demonstrates familiarity with basic prayers.<sup>52</sup> A diplomatic mission headed by Grosmont in 1354 had official, Latin instructions and also secret instructions in French,<sup>53</sup> but since underlings often did the real negotiating on such occasions,<sup>54</sup> this need not indicate Latin on Grosmont’s part. From the thirteenth century understanding of Latin by English royalty was increasingly common, suggesting Grosmont could have known Latin.<sup>55</sup> However, nobles, even though they usually dictated, were also often able to write.<sup>56</sup> If Grosmont was not taught to write, perhaps he did not learn Latin either.

His youth passed during a downturn of sorts in his family’s fortunes. Edmund’s 1296 will partitioned his extensive territories. Thomas, the eldest son, inherited most of them, largely wealthy

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Norman, see S. Crane, ‘Social Aspects of Bilingualism in the Thirteenth Century’, in Prestwich M. and R.H. Britnell (eds.), *Thirteenth Century England VI. Proceedings of the Durham Conference 1995* (Woodbridge, 1997), p. 109; W. Calin, ‘Obscene Anglo-Norman in a Central French Mouth; or, How Renart the Fox tricks Isengrin the Wolf, and Why It Is Important’, *Florilegium*, 18 (2001), pp. 7-19.

<sup>50</sup> The opening Latin sentence in Arnould’s edition is enclosed in square brackets to indicate it occurs only in the later C manuscript, not the earlier S ms. that the edition worked primarily from: *LSM*, p. 1, line 1. For the closing line: Arnould, ‘Henry of Lancaster’, p. 353, note 4.

<sup>51</sup> ‘Jeo prie a touz qe cest fyne verront q’il lour plese eider de trois Pater nr. et trois Ave Mariez’: *LSM*, p. 241 l. 2-3.

<sup>52</sup> See Clanchy’s remarks on rudimentary knowledge of Latin prayers, *op. cit.*, pp. 238, 247.

<sup>53</sup> Fowler, *op. cit.*, p. 135.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 20.

<sup>55</sup> Clanchy, *op. cit.*, pp. 234-240; Keen, *English Society*, p. 225.

<sup>56</sup> See, for instance, McFarlane, *op. cit.*, pp. 238-240 *et passim*.

English possessions. The youngest, John, received two French estates, Beaufort and Nogent-sur-Marne. Edmund's lordships in Wales fell to Grosmont's father Henry, along with a few in neighbouring Gloucestershire.<sup>57</sup> Edmund thus settled his sons' destinies. One was to be a great English magnate, one a minor French nobleman, one a Welsh marcher lord. They married accordingly. Thomas wedded Alice de Lacy, countess of Lincoln.<sup>58</sup> Edmund organized Henry's betrothal to Maud de Chaworth, Welsh heiress and royal ward, with the stipulation that, should Henry die, she was to marry John.<sup>59</sup> As it happened, John died (1307) and Henry received his French holdings.<sup>60</sup> Grosmont's illustrious pedigree notwithstanding, therefore, his patrimony essentially comprised Welsh lordships and two far-flung French estates.<sup>61</sup>

Unforeseeable events were to alter this situation: Thomas of Lancaster's failed revolt against Edward II (1322); his brother's successful claim to his confiscated titles (1323 onward); Edward's deposition by his wife and her lover (1327); their own overthrow in favour of Edward III (1330).<sup>62</sup> In the two latter events Grosmont's father played a prominent part.<sup>63</sup> Consequently, by 1330 Grosmont was heir to most of his grandfather's titles, his family in favour at court.

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<sup>57</sup> Fowler, *op. cit.*, p. 23; *DNB* 26, p. 569; Maddicott, *Thomas of Lancaster*, p. 9.

<sup>58</sup> Maddicott, *Thomas of Lancaster*, p. 3.

<sup>59</sup> Chaworth Musters, *op. cit.* (unpaginated), paragraph 17 and note 5.

<sup>60</sup> Fowler, *op. cit.*, p. 23.

<sup>61</sup> Fowler, *op. cit.*, p. 26. For Henry of Lancaster's non-Welsh estates, see also *DNB* 26, p. 569.

<sup>62</sup> For Thomas' revolt, see Maddicott, *Thomas of Lancaster*, pp. 259-317; *DNB* 54, pp. 288-294. For Henry's claims, see Fowler, *op. cit.*, p. 24; *DNB* 26, p. 570.

<sup>63</sup> Fowler, *op. cit.*, pp. 24-26; *DNB* 26, 570-571.

He himself seems to have been close to his royal cousin.<sup>64</sup> His prospects rose steadily from then on. His book records a sense of special blessing: 'I know that I have had my share [of God's bounties] more than all others'.<sup>65</sup>

By 1330, however, Grosmont was twenty, his formative years behind him. A cousin of the king, he must always have been important. However, before 1322 his prospects were comparatively restricted. He stood to inherit limited territories, mostly in Wales, on the margins of the Francophone world. In the 1320s his family's position had been precarious. Grosmont's father, in France on the king's service in 1322, had been unimplicated in Thomas' downfall.<sup>66</sup> However, Edward II distrusted him. Adopting his brother's arms in 1325, he found himself charged with treason.<sup>67</sup> In 1328 Grosmont's father mounted his own rebellion against Queen Isabella, which failed, though less spectacularly than his brother's.<sup>68</sup> What impact might such circumstances have had on the young Grosmont?

Firstly, they too may help explain his loyalty to Edward III. Grosmont's grandfather Edmund was notably loyal to Edward I. His uncle and father both revolted against Edward II. Grosmont thus had alternative precedents. Thomas himself seems consciously to have modelled himself on Simon de Montfort, his predecessor as earl of

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<sup>64</sup> Fowler, *op. cit.*, pp. 218-219.

<sup>65</sup> 'Jeo conois qe j'ai eu ma part plus qe tout pleyn des altres': *LSM* p. 1 lines 31-32. See more generally p. 1 line 12-p. 2. line 7.

<sup>66</sup> Fowler, *op. cit.*, p. 24.

<sup>67</sup> A. Ailes, 'Heraldry in Medieval England: Symbols of Politics and Propaganda', in Coss, P. and M. Keen (eds.), *Heraldry, Pageantry and Social Display in Medieval England* (Woodbridge, 2002), pp. 87-88.

<sup>68</sup> *DNB* 26, p. 571.

Leicester. 'We are dealing with men who knew their history,' notes Maddicott.<sup>69</sup> Though his uncle and father were publicly rehabilitated after Edward II's downfall,<sup>70</sup> Grosmont may have embraced Edmund's example to make clear that he was not going to follow Thomas'.

Secondly, what effect might the early disparity between Grosmont's illustrious pedigree and his seemingly more limited prospects have produced? Earl Thomas was the realm's foremost magnate, with a power-base in England's heartland and few overseas estates.<sup>71</sup> He was near to the throne in both rank and power. Unlike his brother, whose lands were dispersed, he rarely left England.<sup>72</sup> Grosmont, however, before the mid-1320s, was heir to a more peripheral patrimony within England, set against a strong Continental ancestry and estates. As a result, perhaps his sense of identity was more 'European' than Thomas'. In real terms he stood to inherit more far-flung territories. In terms of the imagination, perhaps his less prominent standing meant that he laid more stress on genealogy and connections, his present situation being less reason for satisfaction. We can only speculate.

However, after 1330 Grosmont gradually inherited Thomas' former holdings. Rather than confine himself to England like Thomas, however, he crisscrossed Europe on Edward III's affairs. Between 1333 and 1361 he spent roughly half his life abroad,<sup>73</sup> not only

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<sup>69</sup> Maddicott, *Thomas of Lancaster*, p. 321.

<sup>70</sup> *DNB* 26, p. 570-571.

<sup>71</sup> Maddicott, *Thomas of Lancaster*, p. 4.

<sup>72</sup> For Thomas, see Maddicott, *loc. cit.* For Henry, *DNB* 26, p. 570.

<sup>73</sup> Fowler, *op. cit.*, p. 214.

in France, the Low Countries and Scotland but also Prussia, Poland, Spain and North Africa.<sup>74</sup> 'No other English nobleman' notes Fowler, 'had figured so large upon the European stage before.'<sup>75</sup> Conversely, after 1345 he rarely visited any of his castles but Leicester; his longest stay there was around six months in 1356.<sup>76</sup>

Could this willingness to move internationally derive from his early circumstances? Until around fifteen he stood to inherit a scattered set of international estates. Did he evolve an identity to match? Might this explain the role he later performed?

If so, he maintained his cosmopolitan identity at some cost. Although he fathered two daughters, he had no male heir.<sup>77</sup> In light of the holdings he had amassed, his failure to consolidate them with a successor seems negligent. His lengthy absences from his wife were presumably partly responsible.<sup>78</sup> Did this proceed from overemphasis on things international? Certainly, Edward's wishes underlay Grosmont's extended stays abroad. Grosmont wanted to return to England in 1356 but was placed in charge of Brittany.<sup>79</sup> However, given the amount of time he spent outside England, the existence of alternative lieutenants, his influence with Edward and their ongoing closeness despite the king's constant use of him,<sup>80</sup> it seems unlikely Grosmont's continental exile was wholly reluctant. It may have arisen

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<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, *passim*.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 221.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 214-215.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 216.

<sup>78</sup> Note though that she went with him to France on some occasions: *ibid.*, pp. 215-216.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 165.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 219.

because he saw himself in strongly international terms, perhaps ultimately to his detriment.

### Grosmont's Prime

During the 1330s Grosmont increasingly usurped his father's position, following the latter's blindness, though he succeeded to the titles only in 1345.<sup>81</sup> His ~1330 marriage to Isabella, daughter of Henry de Beaumont, reinforced his international links.<sup>82</sup> Beaumont, of Maine in France, descended from the kings of Leon and was a grandson of John de Brienne, king of Jerusalem and emperor of Constantinople.<sup>83</sup> Migrating to England, he was favoured by Edward II, whose grants to him provoked the native barons' resentment. They complained of his not being 'a good Englishman'.<sup>84</sup> Earl of Buchan through his marriage to Alice Comyn, he subsequently became earl of Moray, a title David II of Scotland later conferred on Grosmont.<sup>85</sup>

Grosmont's international connections, inborn or acquired, probably assisted his efforts on Edward's behalf, given his participation in much of England's diplomatic activity.<sup>86</sup> One reason Edward lavished honours on him was perhaps to enhance his international

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<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 27; *DNB* 26, pp. 571-572.

<sup>82</sup> For the marriage, see Fowler, *op. cit.*, p. 26.

<sup>83</sup> *GEC*, II, p. 59, note b.

<sup>84</sup> *DNB* 4, p. 659.

<sup>85</sup> Confusion persists on this point. Fowler (*op. cit.*, p. 175), following *GEC*, which has no record of Beaumont's title to Moray, finds Grosmont's receipt of the title greatly mysterious. Beaumont's *DNB* entry (*DNB* 4, p. 659) mentions the title but is plainly unaware of his daughter Isabella's existence.

<sup>86</sup> Fowler, *op. cit.*, p. 20.

standing in negotiations.<sup>87</sup> His network of relatives may likewise have been a diplomatic plus. When Grosmont dealt with the king of Castile, Navarre or France, his relationships with them may have carried some weight. Cardinal Guy of Boulogne, Papal legate and uncle of France's king, for instance, addresses Grosmont in letters as his 'much loved cousin and trusty friend'.<sup>88</sup>

Grosmont served in Edward's Scottish wars in the 1330s, whose pretext was to restore various 'disinherited' lords whose Scottish estates had been confiscated by David II. Henry de Beaumont, foremost among them, seems to have devised new military tactics involving mounted archers and dismounted knights.<sup>89</sup> Some chroniclers found these unchivalric.<sup>90</sup> The new approach inspired England's military strategy in the Hundred Years War, so the period seems to have been decisive in Edward's military formation.<sup>91</sup>

Was it formative for Grosmont? In 1337 he co-captained a raid on the island of Cadsand, in which the Flemish garrison and inhabitants were massacred.<sup>92</sup> The episode was controversial. Edward III later had to establish a Charterhouse in memory of those slain.<sup>93</sup> Archers,

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<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 173.

<sup>88</sup> 'Très chiers et améz cousins et feable amy': Guy de Boulogne, cited in E. Perroy, 'Quatre lettres du cardinal Guy de Boulogne (1352-1354)', *Revue du Nord*, 36 (1954), p. 70.

<sup>89</sup> J. Sumption, *The Hundred Years' War. Volume I: Trial by Battle* (London, 1990), pp. 125-126; R.G. Nicholson, *Edward III and the Scots: The Formative Years of a Military Career, 1327-1335* (London, 1965), p. 133.

<sup>90</sup> Nicholson, *loc. cit.*

<sup>91</sup> Sumption, *op. cit.*, pp. 131-2; Nicholson, *op. cit.*, pp. 1-9 and more generally.

<sup>92</sup> Sumption, *op. cit.*, pp. 215-216; Fowler, *op. cit.*, p. 34; *Oeuvres de Froissart, avec les variantes des divers manuscrits. Tome deuxième, 1322-1339*, ed. K. de Lettenhove (Osnabrück, 1876-77), pp. 429-433. <<http://gallica.bnf.fr>> [accessed 07.01.2007].

<sup>93</sup> Sumption, *loc. cit.*

Froissart implies, had a significant role.<sup>94</sup> Nonetheless, the English acted ‘in the true spirit of chivalry’.<sup>95</sup> Froissart’s account seems defensive; Grosmont’s colleague, prime mover in the raid, was Froissart’s friend and informant Walter de Mauny.<sup>96</sup> However, Froissart seems to confirm Grosmont’s focus on personal prowess: ‘the gallant earl of Derby dashed to the forefront of the first assault with lances, and was wounded’.<sup>97</sup> Other sources tend to corroborate this view of Grosmont’s behaviour.<sup>98</sup> If he used archers on occasion, he did not hide behind them.

Grosmont had been created earl of Derby in 1337.<sup>99</sup> Thenceforth he was engaged continuously in Edward’s service, as military commander, provincial governor or ambassador.<sup>100</sup> He commanded six armies and headed six diplomatic missions over his lifetime, participating in many others in a lesser capacity.<sup>101</sup> He thereby became a figure of European prominence. Edward rewarded him with lands and titles, upgrading Lancaster from a county to a duchy and palatinate and making him lord of Bergerac, with the authority to mint

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<sup>94</sup> Froissart, *op. cit.*, p. 429.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.* The translation is that of Jolliffe: *Froissart’s Chronicles*, ed. J. Jolliffe (Harmondsworth, 2001), p. 76-77.

<sup>96</sup> Sumption, *loc. cit.*; *DNB* 37, p. 445.

<sup>97</sup> Froissart, *loc. cit.* Jolliffe translation.

<sup>98</sup> See for instance Cook, *Historical Background*, pp. 61-68, which cites the *Cronica de D. Alfonso el Onceno*. Chapter two examines such issues more fully.

<sup>99</sup> GEC, VII, pp. 401-403; Fowler, *op. cit.*, pp. 172-186 *et passim*; Bothwell, *op. cit.*, pp. 1134-1140.

<sup>100</sup> Fowler, *op. cit.* For more succinct accounts: *DNB* 26, pp. 572-576; M.T. Tavormina, ‘Henry of Lancaster. *The Book of Holy Medicines (Le Livre de Seyntz Medicines)*’, in Bartlett, A.C. and T.H. Bestul (eds.), *Cultures of Piety. Medieval English Devotional Literature in Translation* (Ithaca, 1999), pp. 19-26.

<sup>101</sup> Fowler, *op. cit.*, p. 20.



his own coins.<sup>102</sup> He thus achieved quasi-princely status and became exceedingly wealthy.

Grosmont's major achievement was his campaign in Aquitaine in 1345.<sup>103</sup> Aquitaine's unusual situation, a French duchy ruled by England's king, made it a source of friction and helped trigger the Hundred Years War.<sup>104</sup> By 1345 French encroachment threatened England's position.<sup>105</sup> Despatched as king's lieutenant, Grosmont halted French expansion, winning the battle of Auberoche and taking Bergerac by siege. Prior to Poitiers, Auberoche was France's most devastating defeat in the war, since it preserved English Aquitaine in the long-term.<sup>106</sup> Grosmont profited immensely from the ransom of captured prisoners, for whom particularly high ransoms were demanded.<sup>107</sup>

Grosmont spent increasing amounts of time abroad. Aside from a year in Brabant as hostage to the merchants of Malines he spent years at a time governing Aquitaine and Brittany and constantly visited the Continent, commanding armies, conducting negotiations, etc. He visited Spain and Prussia on crusade. In total, Fowler calculates he spent roughly half his life after 1333 abroad, with no year

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<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 172-186; Bothwell, *loc. cit.*; Elias, *op. cit.*, p. 56.

<sup>103</sup> For accounts of the campaign: Fowler, *op. cit.*, pp. 54-56, 71; Sumption, *op. cit.*, pp. 463-471.

<sup>104</sup> For a good general background to Aquitaine's position: Sumption, *op. cit.*, pp. 69-99. See also, for a discussion with specific relevance to Grosmont: Fowler, *op. cit.*, pp. 15-21.

<sup>105</sup> Fowler, *op. cit.*, p. 53.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 107.

<sup>107</sup> Sumption, *op. cit.*, pp. 469-470.

passed entirely within England.<sup>108</sup> Much of his time was spent in France and the French-speaking Netherlands. When in Spain, Prussia and even perhaps Scotland, French was probably his main language of communication. He evolved into a European figure, with international estates, used to moving internationally like Edmund, rather than focused on England like his uncle Thomas. He ended by living a life to match his genealogy.

## Grosmont's death

By 1361 Grosmont was powerful and renowned internationally. His daughters were married to William, son of Emperor Lewis of Bavaria, and Edward's son John of Gaunt. He had recently played a major role in negotiating the treaty of Brétigny, which brought phase one of the Hundred Years War to a close.

On 23 March 1361 he died at Leicester. It is often stated that he died of plague.<sup>109</sup> However, while 1361 witnessed the first outbreak since the Black Death, this is open to question. Grosmont seems to have been ill since January, acutely so from the start of March.<sup>110</sup> Plague victims die on average eight days after first infection.<sup>111</sup> Knighton, a monk of Leicester, did not mention plague. He made Grosmont's death his 'headline event' of 1361, treating the 'Second

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<sup>108</sup> Fowler, *op. cit.*, pp. 214-215.

<sup>109</sup> Fowler, *op. cit.*, p. 217; Tavormina, *op. cit.*, p. 19; Legge, *op. cit.*, p. 217; Pantin, *op. cit.*, p. 231.

<sup>110</sup> Fowler, *op. cit.*, pp. 216-217.

<sup>111</sup> O.J. Benedictow, *The Black Death 1346-1353. The Complete History* (Woodbridge, 2004), p. 58.

Plague' only later and, despite noting that 'greater and lesser folk died', not referring to Grosmont.<sup>112</sup> Grosmont's will, made on 15 March, describes what should happen 'if we die elsewhere than at Leicester',<sup>113</sup> suggesting he was not then convinced death was certain. It seems possible the epidemic coincided with his death.

Ill-health seems to have run in the family. His father, nicknamed Henry Wryneck in Froissart, went prematurely blind.<sup>114</sup> Thomas of Lancaster too may have suffered chronic illness.<sup>115</sup> According to Capgrave, Grosmont wrote his *Livre* (1354) 'in the time of his infirmity',<sup>116</sup> although Capgrave, writing generations later, might be confused here. Cuvelier, author of the *Chroniques de Bertrand du Guesclin*, claims that during Grosmont's 1356-7 siege of Rennes he was struck by leprosy: 'the duke of Lancaster... had a most vile, stinking malady... his face looked quite hideous, all leprous and misshapen'.<sup>117</sup> Cuvelier is unreliable, however.<sup>118</sup> Given Grosmont's fame, had he contracted leprosy other sources would doubtless mention it. Interestingly, however, the statutes governing St Mary Newarke, Grosmont's college and hospital, published on 24 March 1356, state that leprous inmates were to be transferred to 'the house at the end of the

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<sup>112</sup> *Knighon's Chronicle 1337-1396*, ed. G.H. Martin (Oxford, 1995), pp. 182-183 (for Grosmont's death), pp. 184-5 (for the Second Plague).

<sup>113</sup> Henry of Grosmont, *Testament, 15 March 1360-61*, in Hamilton Thompson, A., *The History of the Hospital and the New College of the Annunciation of St. Mary in the Newarke, Leicester* (Leicester, 1937), p. 38.

<sup>114</sup> *DNB* 26, p. 572.

<sup>115</sup> Maddicott, *Thomas of Lancaster*, pp. 331-332.

<sup>116</sup> Johannis Capgrave. *Liber de Illustribus Henricis*, ed. F.C. Hingeston, Rolls Series, 7 (London, 1858), p. 163.

<sup>117</sup> 'Li ducs de Lencloistre... Ot une maladie moult vilaine et puant... le visage avoit d'un moult hideux samblant, tout mesel et défait': Cuvelier. *Chronique de Bertrand du Guesclin, tome I*, ed. E. Charrière (Paris, 1839), p. 99, lines 2716-2719.

<sup>118</sup> Fowler, *op. cit.*, pp. 161-162.

town of Leicester which the duke intends to build for leprous folk'.<sup>119</sup> Might this be connected with Cuvelier's assertion? Had Grosmont contracted some ailment he feared was leprosy around 1356?

Grosmont is said to have piously founded various hospitals.<sup>120</sup> This was more or less true. In the 1350s, with death approaching, he seems to have become more devout. His *Seyntz Medicines* belongs to this period, his college at Newarke likewise. In 1351 he went crusading in Prussia with the Teutonic Knights. His will stipulated that he be buried with 'no vanity or parade'<sup>121</sup> (something disregarded by the royal family),<sup>122</sup> with paupers, rather than knights, accompanying his coffin.<sup>123</sup>

If Grosmont was readying himself for death there are also signs he had not yet done with the world. His college's statutes suggest he still hoped for a male heir. When they mention 'the duke of Lancaster' they clearly mean Grosmont himself, not whoever happened to be duke at a given period.<sup>124</sup> One such reference runs: 'after the duke's death, to his heir, if he be a male: otherwise, if the heritage of the said

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<sup>119</sup> *Statutes of the Hospital and the New College of the Annunciation of St. Mary in the Newarke*, in Hamilton Thompson, A., *The History of the Hospital and the New College of the Annunciation of St. Mary in the Newarke, Leicester* (Leicester, 1937), p. 46, clause 13.

<sup>120</sup> Capgrave, *op. cit.*, p. 163.

<sup>121</sup> Henry of Grosmont, *Testament*, 15 March 1360-61, in Hamilton Thompson, A., *The History of the Hospital and the New College of the Annunciation of St. Mary in the Newarke, Leicester* (Leicester, 1937), p. 37.

<sup>122</sup> Fowler, *op. cit.*, p. 218.

<sup>123</sup> Henry of Grosmont, *Testament*, p. 37-38. For a general discussion of Grosmont's will, see Fowler, *op. cit.*, pp. 216-219.

<sup>124</sup> See, for instance, 'by the duke of Lancaster in his lifetime, and after his decease by his heirs': *Statutes of the Hospital and the New College of the Annunciation of St. Mary in the Newarke*, in Hamilton Thompson, A., *The History of the Hospital and the New College of the Annunciation of St. Mary in the Newarke, Leicester* (Leicester, 1937), p. 49, clause 21.

duke happen to be divided between females...'.<sup>125</sup> His wife, probably much younger than himself, was perhaps then still capable of childbirth.<sup>126</sup> Equally, a 1359 papal indult granted plenary remission of sins at death to himself and his wife 'or to another wife, if he takes one after the death of Isabella'.<sup>127</sup> Such references suggest he had not resigned himself to dying without a male heir.

There are other hints of his situation in the 1350s. Seven escutcheons figure on the illustrated front page of one copy of his *Seyntz Medicines*, a fine manuscript Arnould dates to about 1359.<sup>128</sup> Three have been identified: the earl of Lincoln; the earl of Warwick; the Captal de Buch.<sup>129</sup> Grosmont himself was earl of Lincoln. The earl of Warwick was Grosmont's cousin Thomas Beauchamp.<sup>130</sup> A Gascon nobleman, Jean de Grailly, held the Captalat de Buch.<sup>131</sup> They seem to have been longstanding comrades-in-arms, all founder-knights of the Garter (ranked second, third and fourth respectively), plus renowned soldiers.<sup>132</sup> Beauchamp had passed a year in Malines with Grosmont as hostage for Edward III's debts.<sup>133</sup> Jean de Grailly had served under him

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<sup>125</sup> *Statutes*, p. 48, clause 20.

<sup>126</sup> Fowler, *op. cit.*, pp. 174, 215.

<sup>127</sup> 3 June, *Calendar of Entries in the Papal Registers relating to Great Britain and Ireland. Papal Letters Volume III. A.D. 1342-1362.* ed. W.H. Bliss. Searchable Text Edition (Burlington, Ontario, 2005) [http://sources.tannerritchie.com/2005/cpl/cpl\\_vol\\_3\\_search.pdf](http://sources.tannerritchie.com/2005/cpl/cpl_vol_3_search.pdf) [accessed 01/02/2007], p. 607.

<sup>128</sup> For reproductions: Fowler, *op. cit.*, facing p. 33; Arnould, 'Henry of Lancaster', facing p. 353.

<sup>129</sup> Arnould, *Etude*, pp. lxvii-lxviii.

<sup>130</sup> For Thomas Beauchamp, see *DNB* 4, pp. 597-599.

<sup>131</sup> For Jean de Grailly, see *DNB* 23, pp. 257-258.

<sup>132</sup> H.E.L. Collins, *The Order of the Garter 1348-1461. Chivalry and Politics in Late Medieval England* (Oxford, 2000), pp. 288-289.

<sup>133</sup> *DNB* 4, p. 597; Fowler, *op. cit.*, p. 35.

in the 1340s in Aquitaine.<sup>134</sup> Noblemen not uncommonly used such blazons to memorialize friendships or shared campaigns.<sup>135</sup> This seems a case in point. It hints to us who his friends were: old soldiers noted for chivalry.<sup>136</sup>

In the last year of his life, he styled himself in letters: ‘duke of Lancaster, earl of Derby, Lincoln and Leicester, steward of England, lord of Bergerac and Beaufort’.<sup>137</sup> Neither his Welsh titles nor his Scottish title to Moray feature. This represents his important titles, not his favourite ones, but shows nonetheless his progress. The only one he was heir to in 1322 was Beaufort, Champagne. His territorial, if not psychological, centre had shifted from Wales to England, while acquiring a stronger continental foothold.

In contemplating Grosmont’s formation, three themes emerge, though their precise importance to his identity is indeterminable. Firstly, his final, cosmopolitan identity seems merely to recapitulate the pattern mapped out by his ancestry and the distribution of the estates he was born heir to. His royal, international pedigree limited his family ties to England’s barons, while his father’s English estates were peripheral, centred on Wales and balanced by French territories. Although he only had the opportunity to express an international

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<sup>134</sup> *DNB* 23, pp. 257-258.

<sup>135</sup> M. Keen, ‘Chivalry and the Aristocracy’, in Jones, M., (ed.), *The New Cambridge Medieval History. Volume VI c. 1300-c. 1415* (Cambridge, 2000), p. 217.

<sup>136</sup> This tends to support Arnould’s dating of the book to Grosmont’s lifetime, while undermining his suggestion it pre-dates John of Gaunt’s marriage to Blanche of Lancaster. If the shields represent longtime comrades of Grosmont’s, Gaunt’s would not be expected even after the marriage.

<sup>137</sup> Henry of Grosmont, cited by Fowler, *op. cit.*, p. 172.

identity in later life, perhaps he was born 'European', with a somewhat de-centred English identity. His willingness to operate internationally perhaps reflected this.

If so, his time abroad seems to have strengthened aspects of his identity. Scholars remark on his 'good' Anglo-Norman French.<sup>138</sup> No doubt this reflects the extended periods he spent in France. Did a more fundamental acculturation take place?<sup>139</sup> Maddicott's verdict on Simon de Montfort seems apposite: 'despite his English moorings, his travels through "many lands and... the provinces of divers nations", as well as his family background, placed him somewhat apart – a cosmopolitan figure set on the edge of an increasingly insular native barony'.<sup>140</sup> De Montfort, his predecessor at Leicester, was a Frenchman partly assimilated to England. Did the reverse happen to some extent in Grosmont's case?

Scholars of identity refer to tiered identity or concentric loyalties: local, national, international.<sup>141</sup> Grosmont's identity seems to have had peculiarly strong international foundations. He called himself English, but his life suggests his affinities to a wider Francophone 'imagined community' may have been particularly

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<sup>138</sup> For instance: Fowler, *op. cit.*, p. 196; F.J. Tanqueray, 'Review: *Le Livre de Seyntz Medicines, unpublished devotional treatise of Henry of Lancaster* edited by E.J. Arnould (Anglo-Norman Text Society)', *Medium Ævum*, 10 (1941), p. 116.

<sup>139</sup> For the general principles of acculturation, albeit in a post-colonial context: N. Wachtel, 'L'acculturation', in Le Goff, J. and P. Nora (eds.), *Faire de l'histoire* (Paris, 1974), pp. 124-146.

<sup>140</sup> J.R. Maddicott, *Simon de Montfort* (Cambridge, 1994), p. 362.

<sup>141</sup> See, for an example: R. Mason, 'Chivalry and Citizenship: Aspects of National Identity in Renaissance Scotland', in Mason, R. and N. MacDougall (eds.), *People and Power in Scotland: Essays in Honour of T.C. Smout* (Edinburgh, 1992), pp. 50-54.

strong.<sup>142</sup> Contemporaries such as Robert Mannyng expressed hostility to the French aspects of English culture.<sup>143</sup> Grosmont fought the French king but wrote in French.

If Grosmont resembled de Montfort, in other respects he recalled his grandfather, another earl of Leicester: 'a much-travelled, cosmopolitan figure, the Crown's foremost subject by birth and one of its most loyal supporters'.<sup>144</sup> As regards loyalty, Grosmont's uncle and grandfather presented different precedents. Perhaps the turbulence of his youth led him to take Edmund as a role-model.

A third factor in Grosmont's formation was his phenomenal rise. His book suggests a sense of divine favour towards him.<sup>145</sup> Henry III's great-grandson, he was born great. Inheriting Thomas' titles, he had further greatness thrust upon him. In his own person he achieved greater greatness yet. For many years, though, there was a disparity between his illustrious ancestry and his actual situation. He was not destined to be as important as he ended up. How might his lower early expectations have influenced his later behaviour? Contemporaries remarked, for instance, that he '[delighted] in acts of war'.<sup>146</sup> Might this

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<sup>142</sup> The term comes from Anderson: B. Anderson, *Imagined Communities. Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, second edition (London, 1991), title and *passim*. For a discussion of its relevance to the Middle Ages, see L. Johnson, 'Imagining Communities: Medieval and Modern', in Forde S., L. Johnson and A.V. Murray (eds.), *Concepts of National Identity in the Middle Ages. Leeds Texts and Monographs, n.s. 14* (Leeds, 1995), pp. 1-19.

<sup>143</sup> For Mannyng in particular: T. Turville-Petre, 'Politics and Poetry in the Early Fourteenth Century: The Case of Robert Manning's Chronicle', *Review of English Studies*, n.s. 39 (1988), pp. 1-28; for a more general discussion: S. Hussey, 'Nationalism and Language in England, c.1300-1500', in Bjørn, C., A. Grant and K.J. Stringer (eds.), *Nations, Nationalism and Patriotism in the European Past* (Copenhagen, 1994), pp. 96-108, esp. pp. 97-98.

<sup>144</sup> Maddicott, *Thomas of Lancaster*, p. 2.

<sup>145</sup> *LSM*, pp. 1-2.

<sup>146</sup> Fowler, *op. cit.*, p. 104, citing *Foedera*.



have originated in an early decision to excel in a chivalric career open to talent? The next chapter discusses Grosmont's chivalric nature.

## CHAPTER TWO

What was the nature of Grosmont's chivalry? As a knight, he belonged to an international order. Just as French was, literally, Europe's *lingua franca*, chivalry represented a universally recognizable code of gestures. Contemporary accounts depict Grosmont as a paragon of knighthood. Clearly, if his French is thought especially fine for an Englishman (ie. conforming to Parisian models), European arbiters of chivalry such as Froissart found his behaviour similarly clear and comprehensible. In his lifetime England's military tactics were being criticized as dishonourable: Welsh longbows, for instance, were being used to mow down cavalry charges. Just as Anglo-Norman was diverging from Continental French, inventing new words or adopting English loan-words, English chivalry acquired an independent character. Fowler notes that Grosmont's military conduct was somewhat 'archaic'.<sup>1</sup> Should this fact, plus his international reputation, be taken as evidence of conformity to French chivalric norms?

Equally, his *Livre*, while a penitential work, makes him out a failure in chivalric terms. What does this signify? How do we reconcile Grosmont's negative self-representation with his positive portrayals in chronicles? This chapter examines such issues.

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<sup>1</sup> K. Fowler, *The King's Lieutenant: Henry of Grosmont, First Duke of Lancaster, 1310-1361* (London, 1969), p. 220.

## The Perfect Knight

What was Grosmont's chivalric identity? Contemporaries agreed he was a model knight.<sup>2</sup> Unsurprisingly, English writers were partisan, especially Henry Knighton, a monk of Leicester: Grosmont was earl of Leicester. Grosmont has been called the 'hero' of Knighton's Chronicle,<sup>3</sup> where the adjective 'noble' is commonly applied to him.<sup>4</sup> Knighton's account stresses his lord's international prominence, how he impressed the Pope at Avignon, etc. Other English chroniclers also display an anglocentric attitude at times.<sup>5</sup> Knights and foreign chroniclers tended instead to emphasize his chivalric qualities: prowess, valour, etc. He was one of Froissart's exemplary knights ('a valiant lord, wise and imaginative'),<sup>6</sup> for Le Bel 'one of the best and most valiant knights alive, armed or unarmed';<sup>7</sup> for Cuvelier 'the renowned duke... who was so respected.'<sup>8</sup> Sir Thomas Gray, a knight, calls Grosmont 'wise, glorious and valiant'.<sup>9</sup> Suggestions Grosmont was the inspiration for Chaucer's knight or

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<sup>2</sup> E.J.F. Arnould, 'Henry of Lancaster and His "Livre des Seintes Medicines"', *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*, 21 (1937), p. 364, note 1.

<sup>3</sup> G.H. Martin, 'Introduction', in Martin, G.H. (ed.), *Knighton's Chronicle 1337-1396* (Oxford 1995), p. 1.

<sup>4</sup> *Knighton's Chronicle 1337-1396*, ed. G.H. Martin, (Oxford, 1995), pp. 182-183, 183-184 *et passim*; Martin, *op. cit.*, p. 1.

<sup>5</sup> See, for instance, Le Baker, as cited and discussed in Fowler, *op. cit.*, p. 109.

<sup>6</sup> See citations in Arnould, 'Henry of Lancaster', p. 364, note 1.

<sup>7</sup> 'l'ung des plus proeus et des beaulx chevaliers, armé et desarmé, qui soit en vie': Le Bel, cited in E.J. Arnould, *Etude sur le Livre des Seintes Médecines du duc Henri de Lancastre, accompagnée d'extraits du texte* (Paris, 1948), p. ix.

<sup>8</sup> Cuvelier, *Chronique de Bertrand du Guesclin, tome I*, ed. E. Charrière (Paris, 1839), p. 41, lines 1053, 1075.

<sup>9</sup> Gray, cited in Arnould, 'Henry of Lancaster', *loc. cit.*

for *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, while overstated, highlight his closeness to idealized chivalric types.<sup>10</sup>

What was his actual behaviour? Jousting and tournaments were important to him, as to his royal cousin.<sup>11</sup> His book reflects this: he notes that men who joust a lot have broken noses;<sup>12</sup> when jousting, he liked to stretch out his legs in the stirrups to impress female spectators.<sup>13</sup> A founder member of the Order of the Garter,<sup>14</sup> he may have had a role in its inception, bringing news from Spain of the equivalent order of the Band,<sup>15</sup> or through his formation of a team of knights.<sup>16</sup> He engaged equally with *courtoisie*. Chroniclers attest his courteous treatment of ladies in the various French towns he occupied.<sup>17</sup> Leicester Castle, his principal English residence, had a 'daunsyngchambre'<sup>18</sup> and Grosmont confesses that he enjoyed dancing, 'in hope of being admired, then loved, then lost.'<sup>19</sup>

His approach to warfare seems to have centred on prowess. At Cadsand he was wounded leading the rush to combat.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> For Chaucer: A.S. Cook, *The Historical Background of Chaucer's Knight* (New York, 1966). For Gawain, see W.G. Cooke and D'A.J.D. Boulton, 'Sir Gawain and the Green Knight: a Poem for Henry of Grosmont?', *Medium Ævum*, 68 (1999), pp. 42-54; M. Thiébaux, 'Sir Gawain, the Fox Hunt, and Henry of Lancaster', *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen*, 71 (1970), pp. 469-479. For a recent evaluation: F. Ingledew, *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight and the Order of the Garter* (Notre Dame, Indiana, 2006), p. 200.

<sup>11</sup> For discussions of Grosmont's jousting activities, see Fowler, *op. cit.*, pp. 103-105; E.J. Arnould, *Etude sur le Livre des Saintes Médecines du duc Henri de Lancastre, accompagnée d'extraits du texte* (Paris, 1948), pp. xxxi-xxiii.

<sup>12</sup> *LSM*, p. 138, l. 8-9.

<sup>13</sup> *LSM*, p. 76, l. 27-28.

<sup>14</sup> H.E.L. Collins, *The Order of the Garter 1348-1461. Chivalry and Politics in Late Medieval England* (Oxford, 2000), p. 288.

<sup>15</sup> D'A.J.D. Boulton, *The Knights of the Crown. The Monarchical Orders of Knighthood in Later Medieval Europe 1325-1520* (Woodbridge, 1987), p. 109. Boulton's is the standard work on orders of secular knighthood.

<sup>16</sup> Fowler, *op. cit.*, p. 104.

<sup>17</sup> Froissart, cited in Arnould, *Etude*, pp. xxviii-ix.

<sup>18</sup> Fowler, *op. cit.*, p. 194.

<sup>19</sup> 'Par grant desir d'estree preisez, puis amez, et puis perdez': *LSM*, p. 78, l. 12-13. By 'lost' Grosmont means damned.

<sup>20</sup> See above, p. 22.

Besieging Algeciras in Spain, he 'eagerly took part in the fray', once being struck in the face by an arrow.<sup>21</sup> To get there he had ridden non-stop for days, with only four companions able to stay the course.<sup>22</sup> He seems to have been a devotee of challenges to single combat: in 1341 he challenged and defeated Sir William Douglas, a renowned Scottish knight; in another challenge he fatally wounded Sir Alexander Ramsay.<sup>23</sup>

Most notably he challenged Otto of Brunswick in 1352.<sup>24</sup> Ambushed by German knights while on crusade to Prussia, he accused Otto of responsibility, challenging him to combat, to defend 'with his own body... what the truth required'.<sup>25</sup> Grosmont was perhaps foolhardy: Otto (1320-1399) was ten years his junior.<sup>26</sup> Perhaps this explains the concern testified by Grosmont's friends.<sup>27</sup> A public combat was arranged in Paris. Jean II intervened at the last moment, 'unwilling to see such valiant knights fight for so futile a purpose',<sup>28</sup> reconciled the two combatants and offered Grosmont various gifts, of which he accepted only one: a thorn from Christ's crown, which he placed in his collar at Newarke.<sup>29</sup> While in Prussia Grosmont had challenged Casimir II of Poland, having heard he was obstructing the Teutonic Knights' operations.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> *Cronica de D. Alfonso el Onceno*, in Cook, A.S., *The Historical Background of Chaucer's Knight* (New York, 1966), pp. 64-65.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 63.

<sup>23</sup> Fowler, *op. cit.*, pp. 103-104.

<sup>24</sup> See *Knighton's Chronicle*, pp. 110-119. For discussions, see Fowler, *op. cit.*, pp. 105-110; Arnould 'Henry of Lancaster', p. 361; Ferris, *op. cit.*, p. 26.

<sup>25</sup> *Knighton's Chronicle*, pp. 114-115.

<sup>26</sup> J. Louda and M. Maclagan, *Lines of Succession. Heraldry of the Royal Families of Europe* (London, 1981), table 125.

<sup>27</sup> Fowler, *op. cit.*, pp. 109-110.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 109. Fowler is paraphrasing a letter of Jean II.

<sup>29</sup> *Knighton's Chronicle*, pp. 118-119.

<sup>30</sup> W. Urban, *The Teutonic Knights. A Military History* (London, 2003), p. 175.

Such actions earned him his high reputation. Readiness to fight on points of honour, to fight in the front rank, seem to have been a means of defining himself.

## English and French Chivalry

Grosmont's crusade and challenge, remarks Fowler, resembled an episode from chivalric romance.<sup>31</sup> Fourteenth-century chivalric life and literature were increasingly interactive.<sup>32</sup> By the 1300s literature exerted a strong influence on knightly ideals and behaviour. Tournament scenes in Chrétien de Troyes' twelfth-century romances had affected the way tournaments were conducted.<sup>33</sup> Chivalric biography, an emerging genre, depicted famous knights

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<sup>31</sup> Fowler, *op. cit.*, pp. 103, 221. For remarks on the romance origins of challenges, see M. Keen, 'Chivalry and the Aristocracy', in Jones, M., (ed.), *The New Cambridge Medieval History. Volume VI c. 1300-c. 1415* (Cambridge, 2000), p. 215. For a discussion of this incident, see S. Ferris, 'Chronicle, Chivalric Biography and Family Tradition in Fourteenth-Century England', in Benson, L.D. and J. Leyerle (eds.), *Chivalric Literature. Essays on Relations between Literature and Life in the Later Middle Ages. Studies in Medieval Culture XIV* (Kalamazoo, 1980), pp. 25-38, 153-154.

<sup>32</sup> There is extensive scholarship on this point. For general discussions, see Kaeuper 'Societal Role of chivalry', pp. 98-99; M. Keen, 'Chivalry, Heralds, and History', in Davis, R.H.C., J.M. Wallace-Hadrill, R.J.A.I Catto and M.H. Keen (eds.), *The Writing of History in the Middle Ages. Essays Presented to Richard William Southern* (Oxford, 1981), pp. 394-401; S. Ferris, *op. cit.*, pp. 25-38, 153-154; E. Kennedy, 'The Knight as Reader of Arthurian Romance', in Shichtman, M.B. and J.B. Carley (eds.), *Culture and the King: The Social Implications of the Arthurian Legend. Essays in Honor of Valerie M. Lagorio. SUNY Series in Mediaeval Studies* (Albany, 1994), pp. 70-90. For studies of particular writers: R.J. Moll, 'The Scalacronica of Sir Thomas Gray of Heton', in Moll, R.J., *Before Malory. Reading Arthur in Later Medieval England* (Toronto, Buffalo and London, 2003), pp. 31-63; E. Kennedy, 'Geoffroi de Charny's *Livre de Chevalerie* and the Knights of the Round Table', in Church, S. and R. Harvey (eds.), *Medieval Knighthood, V: Papers from the Sixth Strawberry Hill Conference 1994* (Woodbridge, 1995), pp. 221-242; E. Kennedy, 'Editorial Introduction: Literary Background to the *Livre de chevalerie*', in Kaeuper R.W. and E. Kennedy (eds.), *The Book of Chivalry of Geoffroi de Charny* (Philadelphia, 1996), pp. 67-83.

<sup>33</sup> L.D. Benson, 'The Tournament in the Romances of Chrétien de Troyes and *L'Histoire de Guillaume Le Maréchal*', in Benson, L.D. and J. Leyerle (eds.), *Chivalric Literature. Essays on Relations between Literature and Life in the Later Middle Ages. Studies in Medieval Culture XIV* (Kalamazoo, 1980), pp. 1-24, 147-152.

as heroes of romance.<sup>34</sup> Similarly, the chronicles of Froissart and his ilk cast selected knights as chivalric exemplars.<sup>35</sup>

Conversely, knights emulated their literary forebears. Orders of chivalry – the Garter, Star, Band, etc. – were designed along Arthurian lines.<sup>36</sup> Knights read epic *chansons de gestes* that emphasized prowess, such as the Song of Roland, but also chivalric romances portraying idealized courtesy.<sup>37</sup> Grosmont, for instance, confessed to reading ‘frivolous books’ with ‘too great delight’.<sup>38</sup> Such literature seems to have been internalized, leaving knights striving to conform to an idealized image.<sup>39</sup>

Some scholars argue that French and English notions of chivalry and *courtoisie* were divergent. Given the lengthy periods Grosmont spent in France, could he have become acculturated to French-style chivalry? Crane argues for distinct sub-genres of chivalric romance: England’s and France’s socio-political situations were different; their inhabitants therefore had different concerns; subtle sub-generic differences reflect these differing

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<sup>34</sup> Ferris, *op. cit.*, esp. pp. 25-26. For examples of the genre cited elsewhere in this thesis: Chandos Herald, *Le Prince Noir. Poème du héraut d’armes Chandos. Texte critique suivi de notes*, ed. Francisque-Michel (London and Paris, 1883); Cuvelier, *Chronique de Bertrand du Guesclin, tome I*, ed. E. Charrière (Paris, 1839).

<sup>35</sup> Ferris, *op. cit.*, pp. 26-29.

<sup>36</sup> Y. Renouard, ‘L’Ordre de la Jarretière et l’Ordre de l’Etoile. Etude sur la genèse des ordres laïcs de Chevalerie et sur le développement progressif de leur caractère national’, in Renouard, Y., *Etudes d’histoire médiévale* (Paris, 1968), p. 97; D’A.J.D. Boulton, *The Knights of the Crown. The Monarchical Orders of Knighthood in Later Medieval Europe 1325-1520* (Woodbridge, 1987), pp. 22-24, 104-109.

<sup>37</sup> R. Kaeuper, ‘The Societal Role of Chivalry in Romance: Northwestern Europe’, in Krueger, R.L. (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval Romance* (Cambridge, 2000), pp. 97-99. See also Kennedy’s study of the romance reading habits of three thirteenth-century knights: Kennedy, ‘The Knight as Reader’, pp. 70-90.

<sup>38</sup> ‘regardaunt par trop grant delit... de livres de nient’: *LSM*, p. 12, l. 25-26.

<sup>39</sup> For a much-cited example, the case of William Marmion: Moll, *op. cit.*, p. 35; S. Crane, *Insular Romance. Politics, faith and culture in Anglo-Norman and Middle English Literature* (London, 1986), pp. 175-176; M. Keen, *Chivalry* (New Haven and London, 1984), pp. 212-213.

preoccupations.<sup>40</sup> Arthurian romance is a case in point. Robert Mannyng complained in 1338 that, though King Arthur was British, all stories about him originated in France.<sup>41</sup> Arthurian legends, with their high king and centralized government from Camelot, were unappealing to English barons, the patrons of Anglo-Norman poets. English romance instead featured local heroes, often supposed ancestors of the barons, who reinforced baronial links to the land. England's kings fostered Arthurian romances, but they were generally written in France and expressed a more extravagant, impractical, French conception of chivalry.<sup>42</sup> Anglo-Norman romance, concluded West, displayed a 'superficial' grasp of *courtoisie*.<sup>43</sup> Likewise, Anglo-Norman manuals of *courtoisie*, teaching young noblemen correct behaviour, have been seen as more pragmatic than French ones.<sup>44</sup>

Such subtle distinctions within genres may be hard to substantiate.<sup>45</sup> In military matters, though, French and English chivalry can be more confidently distinguished. Initial English victories in the Hundred Years War occurred because, rather than treat battles as extended tournaments, the English adopted new

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<sup>40</sup> S. Crane, *passim*. For a summary of her argument, see pp. 1-12.

<sup>41</sup> S. Hussey, 'Nationalism and Language in England, c.1300-1500', in Bjørn, C., A. Grant and K.J. Stringer (eds.), *Nations, Nationalism and Patriotism in the European Past* (Copenhagen, 1994), pp. 101-102.

<sup>42</sup> R. Field, 'Romance in England, 1066-1400', in Wallace, D. (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Medieval English Literature* (Cambridge, 1999), pp. 161-165; Crane, *Insular Romance*, *passim*, esp. pp. 134-215.

<sup>43</sup> C.B. West, *Courtoisie in Anglo-Norman Literature* (New York, 1966), *passim*, esp. pp. 167-169. See also Crane, *Insular Romance*, pp. 136-137.

<sup>44</sup> H.R. Parsons, *Anglo-Norman Books of Courtesy and Nurture* (Oxford, 1929), p. 1.

<sup>45</sup> For a cautionary review of Crane, see T. Hunt, 'Review. *Insular Romance: Politics, Faith and Culture in Anglo-Norman and Middle English Literature*. By Susan Crane.' *The Review of English Studies*, n.s., 39 (1988), pp. 283-284. However, for a classic study of the way a particular region's circumstances did produce generic change, see G.M. Spiegel, *Romancing the Past. The Rise of Vernacular Prose Historiography in Thirteenth-Century France* (Berkeley, 1993).



military strategies, which the French found dishonourable. They used mounted archers and dismounted knights. England's experience of 'dirty' war in Scotland and Wales underlay this new approach.<sup>46</sup> Longbows, an essential element of English success, derived from the Welsh: Froissart's figures suggest archers composed about half of any English force.<sup>47</sup> Edward III and the Black Prince, renowned for their 'posturing in the chivalrous mode',<sup>48</sup> nonetheless fought to win. Both famously waited on their prisoners at post-combat feasts.<sup>49</sup> However, they seem to have been able to separate chivalric behaviour from serious combat. 'Chivalrous convention,' notes Sumption, 'rarely shifted [Edward] from his purpose.'<sup>50</sup>

Even his chivalry perhaps had self-interested elements. His Order of the Garter and earlier, short-lived, 'Round Table' of knights both followed Arthurian precedents. However, all such late medieval orders of chivalry represented to some extent a calculated attempt by monarchs to harness the aristocratic passion for chivalry to their own ends.<sup>51</sup>

The French seem to have been less able to separate chivalric ideals from real life. At Crécy they brought Genoese crossbowmen into combat. However, having ideological objections to lowborn archers, they deployed them ineptly, with counter-productive

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<sup>46</sup> Sumption, *op. cit.*, pp. 65-68, 181; M. Prestwich, *The Three Edwards. War and State in England 1272-1377* (London, 1980), pp. 197-200.

<sup>47</sup> *Oeuvres de Froissart, passim.*

<sup>48</sup> M. Keen, 'Chivalry and the Aristocracy', in Jones, M., (ed.), *The New Cambridge Medieval History. Volume VI c. 1300-c. 1415* (Cambridge, 2000), p. 221.

<sup>49</sup> *Oeuvres de Froissart, tome V*, pp. 462-3.

<sup>50</sup> J. Sumption, *The Hundred Years' War. Volume I: Trial by Battle* (London, 1990), p. 581.

<sup>51</sup> Keen, 'Chivalry and the Aristocracy', p. 211.

results.<sup>52</sup> Froissart records the French king and his brother cursing them.<sup>53</sup> Ideology seems to have hindered the adoption of new English practices.

France's 'theoretician of chivalry' was Geoffroi de Charny, Jean II's standard-bearer,<sup>54</sup> for Froissart the 'wisest and most valiant' of all knights.<sup>55</sup> Nineteenth-century historians blamed French failures on Charny.<sup>56</sup> His 1350-1 chivalric manual, influential until France's 1356 defeat at Poitiers, advocated death before dishonour.<sup>57</sup> It perhaps inspired suicidal behaviour in French knights.<sup>58</sup> On the eve of Poitiers, where he died, Charny proposed, as an alternative, staging a combat with one hundred knights per side, led by himself and the Black Prince.<sup>59</sup> The French, who greatly outnumbered the English, were proposing to handicap themselves in the name of chivalry.<sup>60</sup> Charny had made a similar offer to Edward III in 1347, in an attempt to resolve England's siege of Calais.<sup>61</sup> Both times the English declined.<sup>62</sup>

Where does Grosmont's behaviour fit? Fowler notes: 'no doubt it was a matter of chance, but... he was given so many

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<sup>52</sup> B. Tuchman, *A Distant Mirror: The Calamitous Fourteenth Century* (London, 1989), pp. 86-87. For an acerbic account of the impact of French chivalric ideology on the 1396 débâcle at Nicopolis, see *ibid.*, pp. 556-561.

<sup>53</sup> *Oeuvres de Froissart, avec les variantes des divers manuscrits, tome V*, ed. K. de Lettenhove (Osnabrück, 1876-77), pp. 46-50. <<http://gallica.bnf.fr>> [accessed 07.01.2007]

<sup>54</sup> R.W. Kaeuper, 'Geoffroi de Charny and His Book', in Kaeuper R.W. and E. Kennedy (eds.), *The Book of Chivalry of Geoffroi de Charny* (Philadelphia, 1996), p. 3.

<sup>55</sup> Froissart, cited in P. Contamine, 'Geoffroy de Charny (début du XIV<sup>e</sup> siècle-1356). "Le plus pruhomme et le plus vaillant de tous les autres"', in *Histoire et société: Mélanges offerts à Georges Duby, II: Le tenancier, le fidèle et le citoyen* (Aix-en-Provence, 1992), *op. cit.*, p. 107.

<sup>56</sup> Contamine, *op. cit.*, p. 115.

<sup>57</sup> *LC*, p. 126, l. 41-44 [trans. p. 127, l. 45-48] *et passim*.

<sup>58</sup> Kaeuper, 'Geoffroi de Charny', p. 14.

<sup>59</sup> Contamine, *op. cit.*, pp. 113-114; Chandos Herald, *op. cit.*, pp. 58-60.

<sup>60</sup> Chandos Herald, *op. cit.*, pp. 59-60.

<sup>61</sup> Contamine, *op. cit.*, p. 111.

<sup>62</sup> Chandos Herald, *loc. cit.*; Contamine, *loc. cit.*

independent commands that... he missed all the noteworthy battles... in which the English used... tactics [i.e. concealed pits, cannons, etc.] that were regarded by the more conservative French knights as offending against all the rules of war.<sup>63</sup> Was it coincidence? Not only was Grosmont elsewhere when these tactics were employed, under his command they were not. He used archers, certainly.<sup>64</sup> However, Grosmont's victory at Auberoche, unlike some other English victories, was fought by mounted, not dismounted, knights.<sup>65</sup> Fowler considers his conduct as a commander old-fashioned. He inclined towards 'archaic' modes of warfare such as sieges, which Fowler concludes diminished his military effectiveness.<sup>66</sup>

Was this predilection for inefficient, oldfangled warfare a sign Grosmont's chivalric style was more attuned to French than English practice? Given his extensive stays in France, might it have been a sign of acculturation? His fondness for single combat, even at a disadvantage, as against Otto of Brunswick, resembled French rather than English behaviour at Poitiers. Even his one military innovation had something of a chivalric connection. He made his fortune in Aquitaine through raising significantly the ransoms demanded for knights taken in battle. This 'opened the eyes of both

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<sup>63</sup> Fowler, *op. cit.*, p. 220. For examples of English tactics, see Sumption, *op. cit.* (for the battle of Morlaix), p. 401; (for Crècy), pp. 526-32.

<sup>64</sup> For mounted archers in Grosmont's suite in Scotland, see R.G. Nicholson, *Edward III and the Scots: The Formative Years of a Military Career, 1327-1335* (London, 1965), p. 246, Appendix III. For his use of archers in Aquitaine: Sumption, *op. cit.*, p. 468.

<sup>65</sup> M. Prestwich, *The Three Edwards. War and State in England 1272-1377* (London, 1980), pp. 198-199.

<sup>66</sup> Fowler, *loc. cit.*

sides' to the possibilities of profiteering by this means.<sup>67</sup> Ransoms, however, were standard practice in tournaments.

Fowler cites Grosmont's siege of Rennes, Brittany, in 1356-1357, as an example of his old-fashioned approach: 'Lancaster's siege shows many curiously archaic features.... There was a good deal of jousting and courteous visits between besiegers and besieged... very much in the tradition that regarded war as a large-scale tournament.'<sup>68</sup> Moreover, not only was siege warfare inherently old-fashioned, Grosmont's way of conducting it was too.<sup>69</sup>

In Froissart's account Grosmont presides over various single combats between English and French knights (du Guesclin vs D'Agorne, Olivier de Mauny vs Bolton) which resembled romances.<sup>70</sup> Bolton, for instance, having killed various partridges, was challenged to combat by Mauny, who wanted to obtain the partridges for the ladies of Rennes. The challenge accepted, Mauny swam the moat, defeated Bolton in combat, and took Bolton back with him to Rennes for ransom. However, Mauny's wounds requiring herbal remedies not available in Rennes, he agreed that, if Bolton would organize for him to be treated in the English camp, he would release him. This was done, he recuperated among the English, freed Bolton and returned to Rennes to continue the defence.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> Sumption, *op. cit.*, pp. 469-470.

<sup>68</sup> Fowler, *op. cit.* p. 162.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>70</sup> *Oeuvres de Froissart publiées avec les variantes des divers manuscrits*, ed. K. de Lettenhove (Osnabrück, 1867-1877), <<http://gallica.bnf.fr/>> [accessed 04/02/2007] pp. 21-27. For treatments of this episode: Arnould, 'Henry of Lancaster', pp. 61-62; Arnould, *Etude*, pp. xlvi-l; Fowler, *op. cit.*, pp. 160-165. For an alternate contemporary account, see Cuvelier, pp. 41-99.

<sup>71</sup> *Oeuvres de Froissart*, ed. K. de Lettenhove (Osnabrück, 1867-1877), pp. 24-26. See also Arnould, 'Henry of Lancaster', pp. 361-2, note 3.

Grosmont himself, then approaching fifty, oversaw such actions rather than participated. He watched the Bolton/Mauny combat with great enjoyment, forbidding anyone to intervene, happily granted Mauny's request for a safe-conduct to the English camp, teasing Bolton about the partridges, welcomed Mauny and praised his valour, housed him in a richly-furnished room, had his personal doctors and surgeons attend Mauny, visited him regularly and, on his departure, presented him with expensive plate and sent his best wishes to the ladies of Rennes.<sup>72</sup> Charny's *Livre* asserted that great lords could inspire chivalry in lesser knights by encouraging noteworthy feats.<sup>73</sup> Grosmont seems to have done this. His sponsorship of this sort of amicality between the two sides, however, seems to have undermined his efforts to capture Rennes.

However, the episode also suggests an inflexible attitude towards honour. The Anglo-French treaty of Bordeaux agreed that Grosmont should lift the siege. This he declined to do. Edward had to dispatch three letters, the third angry: 'you still have not raised the said siege, which surprises us much and displeases us greatly'.<sup>74</sup> The quarrel was evidently memorable: Henry IV, Grosmont and Edward's joint grandson, had it brought to his attention during his dispute with Richard II. He was reminded of Grosmont's otherwise exceptional loyalty.<sup>75</sup> Ultimately a compromise resulted: Rennes capitulated; English forces entered the city; Grosmont's flag flew briefly from the battlements, then the English departed.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> *Oeuvres de Froissart*, pp. 24-26. For an account of similar behaviour on Grosmont's part on another occasion, see Cuvelier, *op. cit.*, pp. 60-64.

<sup>73</sup> *LC*, pp. 106-109, section 18.

<sup>74</sup> Edward III, cited in Fowler, *op. cit.*, p. 163.

<sup>75</sup> *Oeuvres de Froissart*, t. VII, p. 100.

<sup>76</sup> For a discussion, see Fowler, *op. cit.*, pp. 163-164.

Contemporaries had various explanations for Grosmont's refusal but honour appears to have been the crucial issue. Either he had sworn a solemn vow to fly his flag in Rennes and would not break it<sup>77</sup> or, more probably, because he was acting for Jean de Montfort, pretender to the duchy, as well as Edward, he was obliged to continue the siege for Montfort's sake.<sup>78</sup> Whatever the case, oaths and obligations seem to have determined his actions, to the extent of antagonizing the king and attracting the notice of chroniclers.

Charny's manual stressed emphatically the importance to knights of a 'clear conscience': in particular danger of untimely death, they should always ensure they were spiritually ready for judgment.<sup>79</sup> Grosmont's inflexibility on a point of honour, at the high-water mark of Charny's influence,<sup>80</sup> perhaps reflects the impact of French thinking. Edward's exasperation suggests he had not expected disobedience.

The fact that Grosmont's sole rebellious act involved an honour-related quibble rather than any serious political discord is perhaps significant. There are indications he took honour seriously. In 1354 his efforts to assist Charles of Navarre were hampered, as such assistance would have involved violating an oath.<sup>81</sup> On another occasion, after the French and English had exchanged hostages and the French executed theirs, Grosmont dissuaded

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<sup>77</sup> Cuvelier, *op. cit.*, p. 71, lines 1892-1894; Fowler, *op. cit.*, p. 163. For a discussion of such vows, see Keen, *Chivalry*, pp. 212-216.

<sup>78</sup> Fowler, *loc. cit.*, citing the *Anonimale Chronicle*.

<sup>79</sup> R. W. Kaeuper, 'Geoffroi de Charney and His Book', in Kaeuper R.W. and E. Kennedy (eds.), *The Book of Chivalry of Geoffroi de Charney* (Philadelphia, 1996), pp. 63-64.

<sup>80</sup> Kaeuper, 'Geoffroi de Charney', pp. 63-64.

<sup>81</sup> Fowler, *op. cit.*, p. 124.

Edward from retaliating in kind on the grounds it would be dishonourable.<sup>82</sup>

Altogether, Grosmont's conception of knighthood seems to have been high and romance-derived. His refusal to lift the siege of Rennes suggests a rigid conformity to chivalric ideology, sometimes against good sense. His willingness to fight the much younger Otto of Brunswick recalls the 'death before dishonour' concept championed by Charny. Possibly this reflects Grosmont's many years in France.

### The Sinful Knight

Grosmont's self-presentation in his *Livre*, unsurprisingly for a penitential work, is negative. He is a sinner. However, his depiction of himself has a strongly chivalric aspect.

Although the *Seyntz Medicines'* allegorical framework is primarily medical, an alternate, knightly, motif runs through the *Livre*. There is nothing medical about its prologue. Grosmont characterizes himself as a treacherous knight, with Christ his forsaken lord.<sup>83</sup> Despite Christ's many favours towards him, 'more than to many another',<sup>84</sup> Grosmont has transferred his allegiance to the 'foul Devil of Hell'.<sup>85</sup> Although Christ redeemed him from prison (ie. Hell), paying Grosmont's ransom with his own body, Grosmont has returned there voluntarily.<sup>86</sup> While Christ honoured

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<sup>82</sup> Le Bel, cited in Arnould, E.J., *Etude sur le Livre des Saintes Médecines du duc Henri de Lancastre, accompagnée d'extraits du texte* (Paris, 1948), pp. xx-xxii.

<sup>83</sup> *LSM*, pp. 1-7.

<sup>84</sup> 'l'ord deable d'enfern': *LSM*, p. 1, l. 31-32.

<sup>85</sup> *LSM*, p. 2, l. 7-13.

<sup>86</sup> *LSM*, p. 6, l. 7-30.

humanity by taking human form, Grosmont has abandoned it himself, serving the devil: 'not just wearing his livery, but one of his elect intimates'.<sup>87</sup> The relationship is characterized in explicitly feudal terms: the lord/vassal bond; the knightly practice of holding captured opponents to ransom; the system of indentures and retinues, by which lords bound underlings to their service. In short, Grosmont visualized God in terms familiar to him. This chivalric subtext persists through the work. By the end, Grosmont is back on Christ's side, vowing the downfall of 'the devil and his whole band'.<sup>88</sup>

If, therefore, a chivalric vein runs through the *Seyntz Medicines*, can it be seen as a confessed failure to attain specifically chivalric ideals as well as a more general expression of sinfulness? There were romance precedents for knights who related their shortcomings: the widely-read *prose Lancelot* advised that knights should assemble periodically around their lords and describe their adventures, not excepting shameful episodes.<sup>89</sup> The rules of several chivalric orders incorporated this idea, including the order of the Star, instituted two years before Grosmont wrote.<sup>90</sup> His *Livre* does not quite do this. However, while it conforms in many respects to standard penitential works,<sup>91</sup> with a focus on the seven deadly sins,

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<sup>87</sup> 'non pas soulement de sa livree, mes de sa propre seutte comme compaignon': *LSM*, p. 3, l. 1-21 (for citation, l. 18-19).

<sup>88</sup> 'en despit, honte et confusion de l'orde diable d'enfern et touz les compaignons': *LSM*, p. 240, l. 28-29.

<sup>89</sup> Kennedy, 'Charny's Livre', pp. 223-224.

<sup>90</sup> D'A.J.D. Boulton, *The Knights of the Crown. The Monarchical Orders of Knighthood in Later Medieval Europe 1325-1520* (Woodbridge, 1987), p. 200; Keen, 'Heralds', pp. 404-405.

<sup>91</sup> R.W. Ackerman, 'The Traditional Background of Henry of Lancaster's *Livre*', *L'Esprit Créateur*, 2 (1962), pp. 117-118.



on another level it does present Grosmont's sinfulness in chivalric terms.

This can be seen if Grosmont's *Livre* is compared with Geoffroi de Charny's *Livre de Chevalerie*.<sup>92</sup> Charny, Grosmont's close contemporary (~1306-1356, compared with Grosmont's ~1310-1361), resembled him in various ways.<sup>93</sup> Both came from cadet branches of noble lines, rising to great heights partly through loyalty and service to their king.<sup>94</sup> Both were praised as model knights.<sup>95</sup> Both wrote books: Charny's chivalric manual dates from 1350-51, shortly before Grosmont's *Livre*.<sup>96</sup> In 1354, when Grosmont wrote, each was finalizing a religious college, dedicated to Mary and the Annunciation, where their souls, plus those of their relatives and their respective sovereign, would be prayed for. Grosmont's housed a thorn from Christ's crown, Charny's the Turin Shroud.<sup>97</sup> That year, each attended peace talks on behalf of their respective sovereign at Avignon, where they presumably met.<sup>98</sup> Charny's mother Marguerite and Grosmont's stepmother, Alix, were the two daughters of the religious writer and historian Joinville.<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>92</sup> Geoffroi de Charny. *The Book of Chivalry of Geoffroi de Charny. Text, context, and translation*, eds. R.W. Kaeuper and É. Kennedy (Philadelphia, 1996).

<sup>93</sup> For Charny's life: P. Contamine, 'Geoffroy de Charny (début du XIVe siècle-1356). "Le plus prudhomme et le plus vaillant de tous les autres"', in *Histoire et société: Mélanges offerts à Georges Duby, II: Le tenancier, le fidèle et le citoyen* (Aix-en-Provence, 1992), pp. 107-121; R.W. Kaeuper, 'Geoffroi de Charny and His Book', in Kaeuper R.W. and E. Kennedy (eds.), *The Book of Chivalry of Geoffroi de Charny* (Philadelphia, 1996), pp. 3-64.

<sup>94</sup> Kaeuper, 'Geoffroi de Charny', p. 3.

<sup>95</sup> Contamine, *op. cit.*, pp. 107, 114.

<sup>96</sup> Kaeuper, 'Geoffroi de Charny', p. 22. For a discussion of the work, see Kennedy, 'Charny's Livre', pp. 221-242.

<sup>97</sup> For Charny's, see Contamine, *op. cit.*, pp. 115-116; Kaeuper, 'Geoffroi de Charny', pp. 38-40.

<sup>98</sup> For Grosmont: Fowler, *op. cit.*, pp. 136-139. For Charny: Contamine, *op. cit.*, p. 113.

<sup>99</sup> R.W. Kaeuper, 'Geoffroi de Charny', p. 3; Contamine, *op. cit.*, p. 108; *DNB* 26, p. 572.

For Charny the most significant knightly quality was prowess.<sup>100</sup> Grosmont doubtless rated highly in Charny's estimation, since he participated not only in jousts and tournaments but also in actual warfare. Like Charny, he had travelled widely as a crusader. All these activities are highly commended in Charny's *Livre*,<sup>101</sup> which also asserts that distinguished knights who are great lords are more praiseworthy than lesser knights, as they are driven not by sordid motives, but by mere love of prowess.<sup>102</sup> In terms of prowess, therefore, Grosmont satisfied Charny's criteria of knighthood.<sup>103</sup>

However, Charny felt knights required other qualities. In regard to these, what Grosmont says about himself usually fails Charny's test. 'You should not care about amassing great wealth' instructs Charny;<sup>104</sup> Grosmont describes at length his desire for riches.<sup>105</sup> 'Take care not to be so greedy as to take what belongs to others without good cause'<sup>106</sup> Grosmont has unjustly taken people's goods.<sup>107</sup> Charny denounces miserliness;<sup>108</sup> 'refrain from enriching yourself at others' expense, especially from the limited resources of

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<sup>100</sup> Kaeuper, 'Geoffroi de Charny', p. 32; *Livre de Chevalerie*, *passim*.

<sup>101</sup> *LC*, pp. 85-95.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 106-109, section 18.

<sup>103</sup> For a discussion of the accepted chivalric virtues, see M. Keen, 'Chivalry, Heralds, and History', in Davis, R.H.C., J.M. Wallace-Hadrill, R.J.A.I. Catto and M.H. Keen (eds.), *The Writing of History in the Middle Ages. Essays Presented to Richard William Southern* (Oxford, 1981), pp. 400-401.

<sup>104</sup> 'Si ne vous doit ja chaloir d'amasser grant avoir': *LC*, p. 116, l. 166 [trans., p. 117, l. 176-177].

<sup>105</sup> *LSM*, pp. 43-46.

<sup>106</sup> 'Gardez que convoitise ne soit en vous pour tolir ne pour avoir l'autrui sans cause': *LC*, p. 128, l. 20-21 [tr. p. 129, l. 19-20].

<sup>107</sup> *LSM*, p. 18, l. 7-17.

<sup>108</sup> *LC*, p. 124, l. 6-12 [tr. p. 125, l. 7-12].

the poor'.<sup>109</sup> Grosmont has done exactly this and confesses that he dislikes giving leftover food after feasts to the poor.<sup>110</sup>

A worthy knight, states Charny, will not be interested in 'very good wine', 'delicious food' and 'fine sauces', nor indulge in gluttony and drunkenness.<sup>111</sup> Grosmont fails on every count.<sup>112</sup> A worthy knight will not 'pamper his body', or be proud of his beauty, fine clothes or rings<sup>113</sup> Grosmont admires his rings and garters and, in his youth, was vain about his looks.<sup>114</sup> He will not fail to listen to things that will be of profit to him<sup>115</sup> Grosmont neglects to do so, listening instead to trivial gossip.<sup>116</sup> He will not succumb to sloth and oversleep; Grosmont does so.<sup>117</sup>

Charny advises knights to aspire to the discreet love of a noble lady, to stimulate bravery, but not to boast of the relationship.<sup>118</sup> Grosmont admits to such bragging.<sup>119</sup> He prefers kissing lowborn women to pious ladies.<sup>120</sup>

Poor knights are afraid of death; Grosmont is too.<sup>121</sup> 'If they see anyone with a wound they dare not look at it because of their

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<sup>109</sup> 'Et vous gardez souverainement de vous enrichir du damage des autres, mesmement de la povreté des povres': *LC*, p. 130, l. 51-52 [tr. p. 131, l. 53-54].

<sup>110</sup> *LSM*, p. 48, l. 19-24.

<sup>111</sup> *LC*, for wines: 'trop bons vins', p. 110 line 42 [trans. p. 111, l. 45]; for food: 'trop delicieuses viandes', *loc. cit.* [trans. p. 111, l. 41]; for sauces: 'bonnes saulces', p. 110, l. 51 [tr. p. 111, l. 54] gluttony and drunkenness: p. 110, l. 55-56 [tr. p. 111, l. 59-60].

<sup>112</sup> *LSM*, p. 19, l. 24-p. 20, l. 6.

<sup>113</sup> 'n'ayez trop grant amour en vos corps nourrir': *LC*, p. 122, l. 47-48 [tr. p. 123, l. 48-51]; for rings: p. 186, l. 149 – 188, l. 156 [tr. p. 189, l. 155-164].

<sup>114</sup> *LSM*, p. 66, l. 27-p. 67, l. 3.; p. 72, l. 6-9.

<sup>115</sup> *LC*, p. 124, l. 18-19 [tr. p. 125, l. 18-20].

<sup>116</sup> *LSM*, p. 9, l. 20-28.

<sup>117</sup> *LC*, p. 122, l. 6-11; [tr. p. 123, l. 7-12]; *LSM*, pp. 22-23.

<sup>118</sup> *LC*, p. 116, l. 183 – p. 118, l. 191 [tr. p. 119, l. 195-203].

<sup>119</sup> *LSM*, p. 21, l. 21-26.

<sup>120</sup> *LSM*, p. 179, l. 24-32.

<sup>121</sup> *LC*, p. 126, l. 17-18, 28-29 [tr. p. 127, l. 19-20, 29-30]. *LSM*, p. 9, l. 9-14.

feeble spirit'; Grosmont recoils from the stench of his friends' wounds.<sup>122</sup>

'Speak of the achievements of others but not your own and do not be envious of others.... Make sure that you do not praise your own conduct nor criticize too much that of others. Do not desire to take away another's honour.'<sup>123</sup> Grosmont confesses to all this.<sup>124</sup> 'Avoid arrogance'; Grosmont describes his pride at length.<sup>125</sup> Other instances could be cited.

Even Grosmont's account of his recovery from spiritual illness resembles the knighting ceremony: novice knights bathed in fresh water to wash away sin, then were dressed in a white linen tunic to symbolize their newly-embraced purity.<sup>126</sup> Grosmont needed a bath in fresh water to cleanse himself of sin, followed by swathing in white linen bandages to prevent reinfection.<sup>127</sup>

It is conceivable Grosmont had encountered Charny's work. He might have found it interesting, as it was probably envisaged as a guide for the Garter's new rival, the order of the Star.<sup>128</sup> Not only were the two connected, via Joinville; Charny probably wrote while

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<sup>122</sup> 'Et s'il voyent plaies sur aucuns, il ne l'osent regarder du chaitif cuer qu'il ont': *LC*, p. 126, l. 30-31 [tr. p. 127, l. 32-33]; *LSM*, p. 14, l. 1-5.

<sup>123</sup> 'Dites et racontez le bien des autres et le vostre non, et n'aiez envie sur autrui... Et gardez que vous ne loez vostre fait, ne ne blasmez trop l'autrui. N'aiez envie d'oster l'onneur d'autrui': *LC*, p. 128, l. 21-22 [tr. p. 129, l. 21-30].

<sup>124</sup> *LSM*, p. 16, l. 25-p. 17, l. 18.

<sup>125</sup> *LC*, p. 132, l. 97-100 [tr. p. 133, l. 99-102]; *LSM*, p. 15-16, 24-27 *et passim*.

<sup>126</sup> *LC*, pp. 166-171; *Ordene de Chevalerie* in *Ramon Llull's 'Book of Knighthood & Chivalry,' and the Anonymous 'Ordene de Chevalerie'*, ed. B.R. Price (Union City, 2001), pp. 110-112; Kaeuper, 'Geoffroi de Charny', p. 30.

<sup>127</sup> *LSM*, pp. 202-224. Part of this section has been translated into English: M.T. Tavormina, 'Henry of Lancaster. *The Book of Holy Medicines (Le Livre de Seyntz Medicines)*', in Bartlett, A.C. and T.H. Bestul (eds.), *Cultures of Piety. Medieval English Devotional Literature in Translation* (Ithaca, 1999), pp. 26-40.

<sup>128</sup> Kaeuper, 'Geoffroi de Charny', p. 21.

captive in London in 1350-51,<sup>129</sup> while Grosmont visited Paris in 1352, the year of the Star's inauguration.<sup>130</sup>

However, knowledge need not be assumed. Chivalric ideals were widely diffused. Other orders of knighthood existed, with rules Grosmont might have known: the Teutonic Knights, the Castilian order of the Band and, of course, the Garter.<sup>131</sup> Nonspecific chivalric manuals existed, such as Ramon Lull's popular work and the *Ordene de Chevalerie*.<sup>132</sup> Both works can be seen, in any case, as reflecting more general ideas about sin. Charny and Grosmont were both pious knights, with similar moral preoccupations. One wrote a chivalric work with a strong religious subtext, the other a religious work with a strong chivalric subtext.

Among chivalric manuals, however, Charny's *Livre* had a particular emphasis. Like the order of the Star, it responded to the crisis in French chivalry provoked by France's humiliating military defeats at English hands.<sup>133</sup> Knighthood, it was felt, had become dissolute. Reform was necessary.<sup>134</sup> Grosmont, who spent much time in France, potentially encountered this new French anxiety. This may explain why his *Livre* accords so well with Charny's.

The fact Grosmont's general confessional work accords so well with a chivalric manual indicates the centrality of his knightly identity. It also suggests he took knighthood's religious side

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<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 22.

<sup>130</sup> *Knighton's Chronicle*, pp. 114-119; Fowler, *op. cit.*, pp. 108-109.

<sup>131</sup> For the Teutonic Knights, see Urban, *op. cit.*, *passim*; for secular orders, Boulton, *op. cit.*, *passim*; for the Garter, Collins, *op. cit.*, *passim*.

<sup>132</sup> For an overview of such manuals, see Keen, *Chivalry*, pp. 6-17.

<sup>133</sup> Contamine, *op. cit.*, pp. 112-113; Kaeuper, 'Geoffroi de Charny', pp. 48-51.

<sup>134</sup> Kaeuper, 'Geoffroi de Charny', pp. 48-64. For a study of analogous English concerns in the 1590s, see W.M. Ormrod, 'Knights of Venus', *Medium Ævum*, 73 (2004), pp. 290-305.

seriously. Chivalry had its public side, a pantomime of prowess and courtesy, at which Grosmont evidently excelled, hence his glowing portrayal in chronicles. However, it also had its more private side, with concerns about personal honour.<sup>135</sup> Grosmont's and Charny's *Livres* both address this side. Charny was prompted by England's victories in the war, which supposedly resulted from French degeneracy. In Grosmont's case, approaching death probably played a major role. Old soldiers typically became pious in their old age; they had sins to expiate.<sup>136</sup> Grosmont's penitential self-flagellation needs to be seen in this context. His keenness for tournaments and combat, as at Cadsand or Algeciras, indicates he took knighthood's more secular aspect seriously too, however.

Perhaps Grosmont's fondness for old-fashioned military strategies, his quixotic challenge of Otto of Brunswick and his *Livre's* similarity to Charny's, which itself reflected a crisis of French chivalry, were signs of an affinity for chivalry *à la française* rather than English knighthood. It may be hard to demonstrate. If scholarly claims that differences existed are right, Grosmont would be a good candidate for acculturation. As noted, he had a strongly French background and spent much of his life abroad, mostly in France. His French conformed to Parisian norms more than did other fourteenth-century Anglo-Norman works. Evidence can be

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<sup>135</sup> L. Wasserman, 'Honor and Shame in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*', in Benson, L.D. and J. Leyerle (eds.), *Chivalric Literature. Essays on Relations between Literature and Life in the Later Middle Ages. Studies in Medieval Culture XIV* (Kalamazoo, 1980), pp. 77-90. See in particular p. 90 for a discussion of the *Seyntz Medicines*.

<sup>136</sup> J. Catto, 'Religion and the English Nobility in the Later Fourteenth Century', in Lloyd-Jones, H., V. Pearl and B. Worden (eds.), *History and Imagination. Essays in Honour of H.R. Trevor-Roper* (London, 1981), pp. 52-55; M. Keen, *English Society in the Later Middle Ages, 1348-1500* (London, 1990), p. 273.

found in his behaviour that supports such a hypothesis. However, proofs may be difficult to produce.

Charny describes mercenaries, forced to make their fortune by chivalry.<sup>137</sup> He himself rose to prominence in this way. So did Walter de Mauny, the fourth son in his family.<sup>138</sup> The ultimate instance, William the Marshal, was subject of a chivalric biography popular in Grosmont's day.<sup>139</sup> This raises questions about Grosmont's own exemplary valour. A great lord, he did not need to make a career out of knighthood, yet his actions resemble those of adventurers such as de Mauny, who did. Might he have mapped out such a career for himself in his youth, before becoming a great magnate? His unusually high ransom demands display a mercenary streak. William the Marshal had made his fortune by ransoming opponents captured at tournaments.<sup>140</sup>

Grosmont was finally forgotten as a knightly paragon. Was his book to blame? Contemporaries regarded him as another Boucicault, du Guesclin or Black Prince, all famous knights. However, Caxton, exhorting England's knights to emulate their forebears, around 1480, names many of Grosmont's peers in his rollcall of role-models but omits him.<sup>141</sup> Heralds, 'a kind of secular priesthood of chivalry', were arbiters of good knighthood.<sup>142</sup> Chandos Herald's life of the Black Prince, which generally praises

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<sup>137</sup> *LC*, pp. 92-95.

<sup>138</sup> Contamine, *op. cit.*, p. 108; *DNB* 37, p. 445.

<sup>139</sup> Benson, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

<sup>140</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 7-12.

<sup>141</sup> William Caxton, 'Exhortation to the Knights of England', in Benson, L.D. and J. Leyerle (eds.), *Chivalric Literature. Essays on Relations between Literature and Life in the Later Middle Ages. Studies in Medieval Culture XIV* (Kalamazoo, 1980), two pp., unpaginated, following p. xii.

<sup>142</sup> Keen, 'Heralds', pp. 408-409; *idem*, 'Chivalry and the Aristocracy', pp. 216-217.

the valour of men it describes, mentions Grosmont without qualification.<sup>143</sup> Might his damning self-portrayal have interfered with efforts to make an exemplar of him?

The answer is probably no. If Caxton ignored Grosmont, Capgrave, in the same century, praised him.<sup>144</sup> His *Livre* probably never circulated widely. It may have been forgotten before he was. Its influence was probably not decisive. In the decades after Grosmont's death chivalric biographies of celebrated knights appeared, depicting them as romance heroes. These seem to have played a crucial part in preserving fame.<sup>145</sup> Some knights took care to engineer such biographies for posterity.<sup>146</sup> The fact that Grosmont's heirs arranged no positive portrayal was perhaps more significant than his own negative self-portrait.<sup>147</sup>

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<sup>143</sup> Chandos Herald, *Le Prince Noir. Poème du héraut d'armes Chandos. Texte critique suivi de notes*, ed. Francisque-Michel (London and Paris, 1883). <<http://gallica.bnf.fr/>> [accessed 05/02/2007], p. 101, line 1519.

<sup>144</sup> Capgrave, *op. cit.*, pp. 161-164.

<sup>145</sup> Ferris, *op. cit.*, p. 29.

<sup>146</sup> A. Rucquoi, 'Français et Castillans: une "internationale chevaleresque"', in *La "France anglaise" au Moyen Age, colloque des historiens médiévistes français et britanniques. Actes du 111e Congrès national des sociétés savantes (Poitiers, 1986), Section d'histoire médiévale et de philologie, I* (Paris, 1988), pp. 408, 415-416.

<sup>147</sup> Ferris, *op. cit.*, p. 36.



## CHAPTER THREE

Sir Thomas Gray's *Scalacronica* describes Grosmont as 'sage, illustrious and valiant, and in his youth... enterprising in honour and arms, becoming [rigorously devout] before his death'.<sup>1</sup> Scholars generally treat Grosmont as a 'devout layman' whose piety was consistent.<sup>2</sup> Gray suggests otherwise: his religion evolved. Although he was not the only nobleman to become devout as death neared, contemporaries found his piety noteworthy.

This chapter assesses Grosmont's religion. With which fourteenth-century trends did it belong? How did it relate to the practices and beliefs of contemporaries?

### Evidence

Firstly, what were his religious practices? Why did his devotion intensify? How did his beliefs manifest?

Before the late 1340s there is little record of obvious piety. Capgrave, long after Grosmont's death, claimed that his upbringing was pious and that he passed his youth crusading.<sup>3</sup> However,

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<sup>1</sup> 'Sage, glorious et prus, et en sa juvent revaillous en honour et armys et devaunt son decesse durement bon Cristien': Gray, cited in E.J.F. Arnould, 'Henry of Lancaster and His "Livre des Seintes Medicines"', *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*, 21 (1937), p. 364, note 1. The translation modifies that of Maxwell, which fails to stress the strictness of Grosmont's piety: Sir Thomas Gray, *The Scalacronica. The Reigns of Edward I, Edward II and Edward III as Recorded by Sir Thomas Gray*, ed. H. Maxwell, A Llanerch Facsimile Reprint of the Glasgow Edition of 1907 (Felinfach, 2001), p. 168.

<sup>2</sup> Pantin coined the term: W.A. Pantin, *The English Church in the Fourteenth Century* (Cambridge, 1955), p. 231. Fowler used it as a chapter heading: K. Fowler, *The King's Lieutenant: Henry of Grosmont, First Duke of Lancaster, 1310-1361* (London, 1969), 'Chapter XV: A Devout Layman', pp. 187-196. The term has been widely cited, for instance, by M.D. Legge, *Anglo-Norman Literature and its Background* (Oxford, 1963), p. 220.

<sup>3</sup> Johannis Capgrave. *Liber de Illustribus Henricis*, ed. F.C. Hingeston, Rolls

Capgrave may have read backwards from Grosmont's later life. In fact, the Croyland Chronicle asserts that in 1327 he assisted his brother-in-law in a dispute with monks over land-titles:

'On one occasion, the said Thomas Wake assembled together a multitude of noble youths, no less distinguished for their high birth than their valour, among whom was lord Henry, afterwards duke of Lancaster... and determined to make a violent attack upon the people of Spalding.'<sup>4</sup>

In Spain in 1343 he participated in the siege of Algeciras and a raid on a North African town.<sup>5</sup> Officially he was there 'for the salvation of [his soul]'.<sup>6</sup> In fact he had come to negotiate with Castile's king.<sup>7</sup> Since he was described in 1344 as '[delighting] in the acts of war',<sup>8</sup> the crusade's martial aspect was perhaps its great attraction.

Real evidence of devotion dates from the late 1340s. In an unfortunate departure from his usual practice, Fowler provides no

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Series, 7 (London, 1858), p. 161. For the circumstances in which Capgrave wrote, see A. Gransden, *Historical Writing in England II, c. 1307 to the Early Sixteenth Century* (Ithaca, 1982), pp. 389-390.

<sup>4</sup> *The Croyland Chronicle*, cited in T. Turville-Petre, 'Politics and Poetry in the Early Fourteenth Century: the Case of Robert Manning's Chronicle', *Review of English Studies*, n.s. 39 (1988), p. 20. Note that, although part of the Croyland Chronicle was notoriously forged (see Gransden, *op. cit.*, pp. 388 and 490-491 for details) this section was not.

<sup>5</sup> For a contemporary account, see *Cronica de D. Alfonso el Onceno*, translated in Cook, A.S., *The Historical Background of Chaucer's Knight* (New York, 1966), pp. 63-68. See also Fowler, *op. cit.*, p. 45.

<sup>6</sup> Fowler, *loc. cit.*; *Cronica*, p. 63.

<sup>7</sup> Fowler, *loc. cit.*

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 104.

dates in his chapter detailing Grosmont's religious activities.<sup>9</sup> Since some of Fowler's sources are not readily obtainable for checking, this presents difficulties in tracking Grosmont's religious development. However, his actions as recorded in the Calendar of Patent Rolls suggest active piety began around 1348. Prior to then, his recorded religious activity consisted of sending letters assisting religious houses with land transactions.<sup>10</sup> From 1348 there is a range of benefactions, etc., which suggest active religiosity.<sup>11</sup> If the Patent Rolls are representative, Grosmont became assiduously religious around that time.

However, he succeeded his father only in 1345 and the mid-1340s saw him occupied in Aquitaine.<sup>12</sup> He may previously have lacked land, money and time for religious benefaction. Equally, there may be earlier pious acts not mentioned in the Patent Rolls. However, records after 1348 also detail concessions obtained from the Pope: the right to a portable altar; to receive the sacraments of penance from his private chaplain, etc.<sup>13</sup> These suggest a growing piety.

His high-profile religious deeds date from the 1350s. The crusade to Prussia and subsequent acquisition of a thorn from Christ's crown occurred in 1351-52.<sup>14</sup> As in Spain, he mixed business with piety, accompanying a shipment of bullion from Edward to the

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<sup>9</sup> See Fowler, *op. cit.*, Chapter XV, pp. 187-188, plus notes, pp. 288-289.

<sup>10</sup> Fowler, *op. cit.*, p. 188.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 188-189. See, for example, *CPR* 1348-50, p. 19 (10 Feb. 1348, grant of a hospital); *ibid.*, p. 560 (23 June 1348, an alienation in mortmain); *CPR* 1354-58, p. 134 (1 Nov. 1354, alienation in mortmain); *CPR* 1358-1361, p. 246 (18 Feb. 1359, assignment in mortmain); *ibid.*, p. 295 (7 Sept. 1359, alienation in mortmain); *ibid.*, p. 506 (29 Nov. 1360, alienation in frank almain).

<sup>12</sup> For his succession, Fowler, *op. cit.*, p. 72. For the campaign in Aquitaine, *ibid.*, pp. 53-74.

<sup>13</sup> *CPL* 1342-1362, p. 458 (2 July 1351); *ibid.*, p. 51 (9 March 1352).

<sup>14</sup> Fowler, *op. cit.*, pp. 105-110.

Teutonic Knights.<sup>15</sup> It seems he took many people with him; a Papal letter notes they travelled 'mainly at their own expense'.<sup>16</sup>

His *Seyntz Medicines* dates from 1354. Over the same period he established a large religious foundation: the college of the Annunciation of St Mary, Newarke.<sup>17</sup> This was an enhanced version of a hospital founded by his father.<sup>18</sup> It housed one hundred poor and sick individuals, plus canons whose duty was to pray for Grosmont's soul and those of his parents, family and descendants plus the royal family. Arrangements were finalized in 1356.<sup>19</sup> However, Grosmont had begun renovating his father's institution as early as 1351.<sup>20</sup>

This was not his only foundation. He reportedly founded numerous hospitals.<sup>21</sup> St Mary's statutes mention a leper hospital he planned to erect on Leicester's outskirts, perhaps part of St Leonard's Hospital.<sup>22</sup> Sometimes noblemen built leprosaria in view

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<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 105.

<sup>16</sup> Knighton, *op. cit.*, pp. 110-113; *CPL* 1342-1362, p. 459.

<sup>17</sup> The authoritative account is that of A. Hamilton Thompson, *The History of the Hospital and the New College of the Annunciation of St. Mary in the Newarke, Leicester* (Leicester, 1937), pp. 24-40. For a brief description, see Fowler, *op. cit.*, pp. 188-192.

<sup>18</sup> Hamilton Thompson, *op. cit.*, pp. 11-23.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 31.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 25; *CPR* 1350-54, p. 170 (28 Oct. 1351).

<sup>21</sup> Capgrave, *op. cit.*, p. 163. Fowler, *op. cit.*, pp. 187-188. For Grosmont's endowments of hospitals, see *CPR* 1348-50, p. 19 (10 Feb. 1348); *CPR* 1354-58, p. 134 (1 Nov. 1354); *CPR* 1358-1361, p. 246 (18 Feb. 1359).

<sup>22</sup> *The Statutes of the Hospital and the New College of the Annunciation of St. Mary in the Newarke*, in Hamilton Thompson, A., *The History of the Hospital and the New College of the Annunciation of St. Mary in the Newarke, Leicester* (Leicester, 1937), p. 46, statute 13. While Hamilton Thompson (p. 46, note 23) states that the proposed establishment was St Leonards, Grosmont already possessed this hospital (see Fowler, *loc. cit.*), which had been founded in the previous century (see: 'Hospitals: St Leonard, Leicester', *A History of the County of Leicestershire: Volume 2* [1954], p. 41. URL: <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.asp?compid=38176>. Date accessed: 10 February 2007).

of their castles to display their 'underlying humility'.<sup>23</sup> Perhaps Grosmont did likewise.<sup>24</sup>

His will requested 'no vanity or parade' at his funeral,<sup>25</sup> though in fact the Black Prince draped his coffin with cloth of gold.<sup>26</sup> From mid-century such posthumous humility was increasingly common.<sup>27</sup> The fact Grosmont reportedly wore a hair-shirt beneath his sumptuous clothing perhaps signifies more heartfelt humility,<sup>28</sup> seemingly confirming Gray's comment on his rigorous piety.

If the evidence, such as it is, suggests an intensification of religiosity around 1348, might the Black Death have triggered it? In fact, plague may well have concentrated his mind but was probably not the sole factor.

Evidence for plague is mainly suggestive. In 1348, the year Grosmont's religious benefactions seemingly began, Edward III set up two chapels similar to Grosmont's college: St George's, Windsor,

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<sup>23</sup> C. Rawcliffe, 'Learning to Love the Leper: Aspects of Institutional Charity in Anglo Norman England', in Gillingham, J. (ed.), *Anglo-Norman Studies XXIII. Proceedings of the Battle Conference 2000* (Woodbridge, 2001), p. 250.

<sup>24</sup> The leprosarium is likely to have been visible from Leicester Castle. For the layout of fourteenth-century Leicester, see G.H. Martin, 'The Topography of Medieval Leicester', in Martin, G.H. (ed.), *Knighton's Chronicle 1337-1396* (Oxford 1995), pp. lxxvii-lxxx. For an artist's impression of the castle and its surrounds in the Middle Ages, see J.R. Maddicott, *Simon de Montfort* (Cambridge, 1994), p. 57.

<sup>25</sup> Henry of Grosmont, *Testament, 15 March 1360-61*, in Hamilton Thompson, A., *The History of the Hospital and the New College of the Annunciation of St. Mary in the Newarke, Leicester* (Leicester, 1937), p. 37.

<sup>26</sup> Fowler, *op. cit.*, p. 218. For a slightly different account, see I. Mortimer, *The Perfect King. The Life of Edward III, Father of the English Nation* (London, 2006), p. 347.

<sup>27</sup> J. Catto, 'Religion and the English Nobility in the Later Fourteenth Century', in Lloyd-Jones, H., V. Pearl and B. Worden (eds.), *History and Imagination. Essays in Honour of H.R. Trevor-Roper* (London, 1981), pp. 50-51; M. Keen, *English Society in the Later Middle Ages, 1348-1500* (London, 1990), pp. 280-281. For the case of Walter de Mauny, see *DNB* 37, p. 448.

<sup>28</sup> Capgrave, *op. cit.*, p. 163.

and St Stephen's, Westminster.<sup>29</sup> The threat of death, Grosmont's *Livre* stated in 1354, had tended to stimulate short bursts of piety that had not lasted.<sup>30</sup> Perhaps the Plague was one example.

While the *Livre's* equation of spiritual and bodily disease was not original,<sup>31</sup> in 1354 it may have had special resonance. Grosmont wrote in the period between the Black Death and 1361's 'Second Plague', when plague still seemed a one-off manifestation of divine displeasure.<sup>32</sup> The text never mentions the Black Death explicitly but does refer to 'this world of frightful death and sudden death and then everlasting death',<sup>33</sup> perhaps alluding to it. While plague's impact on the arts is disputed and uncertain,<sup>34</sup> the *Seyntz Medicines* remains a work of the immediate post-plague era, marked visibly or invisibly by the experience. Given the scale of the epidemic and its apparently divine origin some effect on Grosmont is conceivable.

However, it is unlikely to have been decisive. Firstly, as noted, Grosmont's greater piety may have been more apparent than

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<sup>29</sup> W.M. Ormrod, 'The Personal Religion of Edward III', *Speculum*, 64 (1989), pp. 865-866.

<sup>30</sup> *LSM*, p. 9, lines 9-14.

<sup>31</sup> R.W. Ackerman, 'The Traditional Background of Henry of Lancaster's *Livre*', *L'Esprit Créateur*, 2 (1962), p. 117.

<sup>32</sup> B.L. Grigsby, *Pestilence in Medieval and Early Modern English Literature. Studies in Medieval History and Culture* (New York, 2004), pp. 124-125; R. Horrox, 'Purgatory, Prayer and Plague: 1150-1380', in Jupp, P.C. and C. Gittings (eds.), *Death in England. An Illustrated History* (New Brunswick, 1999), p. 114.

<sup>33</sup> 'En cest siecle de vileyne morte et de morte subite et puis de la mort pardurable:' *LSM*, p. 34, line 20-21.

<sup>34</sup> See Grigsby, *op. cit.*, p. 125; Horrox, *op. cit.*, p. 114. P. Lindley provides a recent overview of different opinions: 'The Black Death and English Art: A Debate and Some Assumptions', in Ormrod, M. and P. Lindley (eds.), *The Black Death in England* (Stamford, 1996), pp. 125-146. However, this primarily addresses architecture and the fine arts, which have their own issues. The linguistic impact is treated briefly on p. 131. For language and literature, see also: M.J. Bennett, 'Forms of Cultural Expression', in Griffiths, R. (ed.), *The Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries. The Short Oxford History of the British Isles* (Oxford, 2003), pp. 117-146. For later developments in religious devotion, see N. Bulst, 'Heiligenverehrung in Pestzeiten. Soziale und religiöse Reaktionen auf die spätmittelalterlichen Pestepidemien', in Löther, A. et al. (eds.), *Mundus in imagine: Bildersprache und Lebenswelten im Mittelalter. Festgabe für Klaus Schreiner* (Münich, 1996), pp. 63-97.

real or merely have reflected greater means and ability to donate lands. Secondly, in 1348 Grosmont, around thirty-eight, was perhaps entering a pious phase of life anyway. Medieval people tended to become more pious as they aged, even before 1348, since death and judgment were inevitable. Grosmont's religious college revisited a scheme of his father's from 1330-31.<sup>35</sup> Such colleges were not new. Soldiers especially were given to large-scale benefaction; either they had much to expiate or their experiences made them thoughtful.<sup>36</sup>

In short, a combination of factors seems probably responsible for Grosmont's growing devotion. Plague potentially had a catalytic effect but possibly affected a mind already predisposed. Gray implied Grosmont was unusually religious. Perhaps the plague intensified something that might otherwise have been less pronounced or less abrupt. As the *Livre* suggests, it may have inspired acute rather than chronic piety.

Irrespective of plague's impact, Grosmont's link between unexpected, frightful death and eternal death provides a key to his thinking. His *Livre* contains remarks along the lines of 'I will go to Hell, Lord, unless you save me'.<sup>37</sup> His religious works form part of a penitential programme with salvation its object. His major

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<sup>35</sup> Hamilton Thompson, *op. cit.*, pp. 11-12.

<sup>36</sup> Catto, 'Religion and the English Nobility', pp. 52-55; Keen, *English Society*, p. 273. For comparable benefactions by Grosmont's contemporaries, see *DNB* 37, pp. 447-448 (for Walter de Mauny), vol. 23, p. 258 (for Jean de Grailly) and vol. 4, p. 598 (for Thomas Beauchamp).

<sup>37</sup> See, for example, *LSM*, p. 12, lines 6-8 ('et en poynt de la getter mult parfond en enfern si vous, douce Sire, ceo poynt ne metteiz a poynt sanz poynt de delaye': 'and in danger of casting [my soul] deep into Hell if you, sweet Lord, do not settle the matter without delay'); *ibid.*, p. 15, lines 8-10 (his tongue will be the death of him, body and soul, 'si vous, douce Sire, ne feustetz plus pitous et plus droiturels de jugeant nous q'ele n'este': if you, sweet Lord, be not more compassionate and just in judging us than it is).

enterprises aimed at securing remission of his sins and prayers for his soul.<sup>38</sup>

By 1300 Purgatory had become accepted as a halfway house between Heaven and Hell.<sup>39</sup> It had been known that the prayers of the living assisted the dead but it had been unclear how. Henceforth, prayer was explained: it accelerated the recipient's passage through Purgatory to paradise.<sup>40</sup> An 'economy of salvation' developed, with prayers, indulgences, etc. all assisting souls on their way.<sup>41</sup>

Those who died on crusade had their sins remitted.<sup>42</sup> Departing for Prussia, Grosmont received from the Pope the assurance of a plenary indulgence at the hour of death.<sup>43</sup>

One function of Grosmont's religious college at Leicester was to ensure continuing prayers for his soul. The college statutes underline prayer's importance. Daily mass was to be celebrated in perpetuity for Grosmont, his relatives and friends.<sup>44</sup> Non-attendance at mass attracted substantial fines. These were distributed among those who had attended mass, ensuring absenteeism was reported, whereas fines for other offences were put towards upkeep of the church.<sup>45</sup> Absence from the college was

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<sup>38</sup> See, for a discussion of this general phenomenon, Keen, *English Society*, pp. 272-274.

<sup>39</sup> Horrox, *op. cit.*, pp. 90, 109-110; Keen, *English Society*, pp. 272-273; J. Le Goff, *The Birth of Purgatory* (Chicago, 1984), pp. 284-286 *et passim*. *Ibid.*, chapter seven: the Logic of Purgatory, pp. 209-234 discusses the new ideas that followed from the concept of Purgatory.

<sup>40</sup> Le Goff, *op. cit.*, pp. 293-294, 350-352; Keen, *English Society*, pp. 272-273.

<sup>41</sup> See, for instance, the remarks of Ormrod on Edward III: Ormrod, *op. cit.*, p. 854.

<sup>42</sup> Le Goff, *op. cit.*, p. 330.

<sup>43</sup> *CPL* 1342-1362, p. 459 (9 March 1352).

<sup>44</sup> *Statutes*, pp. 54-55, statute 32.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 55-56, statutes 28-29. For stipulations regarding other fines, see *ibid.*, p. 58, statute 41.



strictly regulated,<sup>46</sup> prayer for the souls of persons other than Grosmont or his connections forbidden.<sup>47</sup> This emphasis reflects the institution's function: to ease Grosmont's passage through Purgatory by means of prayer. Some of his other benefactions stipulated similar perpetual prayer.<sup>48</sup> Contemporaries had similar concerns. Jean de Grailly's 1369 will, for instance, required fifty thousand masses to be said for his soul in the year after his death.<sup>49</sup>

Visitors to the college may also have prayed for the founders. Its holy thorn perhaps attracted pilgrims. The Pope granted 'relaxation of a year of enjoined penance' to those who visited the church on St Michael's Day; this led to a 'multitude of the faithful flocking to the church'.<sup>50</sup>

The statutes mention a chest for the college's books.<sup>51</sup> It is unknown whether it held a copy of Grosmont's *Seyntz Medicines* but this too had a prayer-garnering function. Its epilogue requested those who read it or heard it read to say a prayer for the author.<sup>52</sup> This was not unusual. Charny's *Livre*, for instance, has a request that people pray for his soul.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 53-54, statute 31.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 57, statute 37.

<sup>48</sup> For examples, see Fowler, *op. cit.*, p. 188; *CPR* 1348-1350, p. 19 (10 Feb. 1348); *CPR* 1354-58, p. 134 (1 Nov. 1354); *CPR* 1358-61, p. 246 (18 Feb. 1359); *ibid.*, p. 295 (7 Sept 1359); *ibid.*, pp. 506-7 (29 Nov. 1360).

<sup>49</sup> *DNB* 23, p. 258. For similar acts of Edward III, see: Ormrod, *op. cit.*, p. 855.

<sup>50</sup> *CPL* 1342-1362, p. 286 (3 April 1349); *ibid.*, p. 458 (9 March 1352).

<sup>51</sup> *Statutes*, p. 72-73, statute 70.

<sup>52</sup> *LSM*, p. 238, lines 18-21, p. 241, lines 2-3.

<sup>53</sup> *LC*, p. 198, line 59-60 [trans., p. 199, line 61-62].

## Religious Fashions

Purgatory was not Grosmont's only concern though. His religious acts reflect several fourteenth-century religious preoccupations: the penitential trend; a stress on Christ's humanity; concerns about grace and salvation.

Grosmont's *Livre* is a penitential work, a genre arising from the Fourth Lateran Council's requirement that Christians confess annually.<sup>54</sup> The work betrays a strong awareness of the genre's conventions.<sup>55</sup> It conforms vaguely to penitential works' tripartite structure: contrition, confession and satisfaction.<sup>56</sup> The prologue characterizes Grosmont as a rebellious knight, deserter of God; the first half is a confession of his sins; the second concerns his purification. Equation of spiritual and bodily infection was a standard feature of confessional works, as was use of the seven deadly sins as an organizing principle.<sup>57</sup> Another allegory used by Grosmont, that of the body as a besieged castle, was also commonplace, treated notably in Grosseteste's *Chateau d'Amour*.<sup>58</sup> The work, therefore, was not unprecedented.

The *Seyntz Medicines* displays the genre's characteristic contrition. Pride was typically regarded as the worst of the seven

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<sup>54</sup> For the decree: *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils, vol. I*, ed. N.P. Tanner (London, 1990), p. 245. For a discussion of the decree, T.N. Tentler, *Sin and Confession on the Eve of the Reformation* (Princeton, 1977), pp. 20-22. For the rise of the genre, see M.F. Braswell, *The Medieval Sinner: Characterization and Confession in the Literature of the English Middle Ages* (Rutherford, 1983), 'Chapter 2: Educating the Audience: The Sinner Emerges', pp. 36-60.

<sup>55</sup> The *Seyntz Medicines*' generic aspect is treated by Ackerman, *op. cit.*, p. 117 *et passim*. See also Legge, *op. cit.*, p. 218.

<sup>56</sup> M.W. Bloomfield, *The Seven Deadly Sins. An Introduction to the History of a Religious Concept* (East Lansing, 1952), p. 174.

<sup>57</sup> Ackerman, *op. cit.*, p. 117; Bloomfield, *op. cit.*, p. 163.

<sup>58</sup> For Grosmont's use of the allegory: *LSM* pp. 64-66, 81-84 and elsewhere. For uses by other people: Ackerman, *loc. cit.*; Bloomfield, *op. cit.*, p. 175.

sins, from which the others arose.<sup>59</sup> Penitential works stressed the value of meekness and repentant tears.<sup>60</sup> Grosmont concurred with these sentiments, praising at length Christ's humility<sup>61</sup> and castigating his own vanity.<sup>62</sup>

It has been suggested Grosmont's *Livre* was written as a penance prescribed by his confessor, 'a sort of 'imposition'.<sup>63</sup> There is, however, no firm evidence for this. Grosmont asserted, perhaps disingenuously, that he wrote at the urging of unspecified friends<sup>64</sup> (medieval writers regularly claimed to have written on command).<sup>65</sup> He also stated he wished to 'dedicate his spare time to the service of God'.<sup>66</sup> He indeed had time on his hands in 1354. Noble authors often wrote under such circumstances, in captivity for example.<sup>67</sup> Perhaps Grosmont, at a loose end, decided to write something, like others, before deciding on his subject. We should not automatically assume that since the work was penitential it was prescribed as penance.

Grosmont seemingly embraced the idea. He clearly anticipated an audience, remarking periodically 'for those who read this book or hear it read'.<sup>68</sup> He expected it to be copied out,

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<sup>59</sup> Braswell, *op. cit.*, p. 40; Bloomfield, *op. cit.*, pp. 172, 174, 179 *et passim*. Bloomfield's is the standard work on the seven deadly sins.

<sup>60</sup> For a recently edited work that stresses humility and weeping: M. Taguchi, 'A Middle English Penitential Treatise on Job 10:20-22, *Dimitte Me, Domine...*', *Mediaeval Studies*, 67 (2005), esp. pp. 205-213.

<sup>61</sup> *LSM*, pp. 27-42.

<sup>62</sup> *LSM*, pp. 15-16, 24-26, 66-67, 71-72.

<sup>63</sup> Legge, *op. cit.*, pp. 218-219.

<sup>64</sup> *LSM*, p. 240, lines 8-11.

<sup>65</sup> E.R. Curtius, *English Literature and the Latin Middle Ages* (London, 1953), p. 85.

<sup>66</sup> 'De occuper un temps qe me soleit estre ocious en ascune service de Dieux': *LSM*, p. 240, lines 4-5.

<sup>67</sup> *Supra*, p. 8.

<sup>68</sup> For instance: 'touz ceaux qe cest petit livre lirront ou orront lire': *LSM*, p. 238, line 19-20. See also *ibid.*, p. 31, lines 4-5; p. 33, lines 10-11;

requesting those who did so to amend and improve it<sup>69</sup> (again a customary remark in religious works).<sup>70</sup> Three copies of the *Livre* survive, none the original, suggesting a wish to publicize the work.

Lancastrian dukes typically had Carmelite friars for confessors.<sup>71</sup> Grosmont's was John de Ripis.<sup>72</sup> Ripis presumably knew of Grosmont's book, but did not necessarily suggest it. Any penance requiring Grosmont publicly to declare his sins might have violated the confidential nature of the 'seal of confession'.<sup>73</sup>

How autobiographical was the work, though? Fictional confessions of a generic nature did exist.<sup>74</sup> Not all Grosmont's confessions are original. His sins of slothfulness, for instance, strongly resemble those commonplace elsewhere, including the allegorical poem *Piers Plowman*. These too stress habits such as 'sleeping in' rather than attending mass.<sup>75</sup>

On the other hand, those sins he describes are all ones that might be expected of him. He provides detail seemingly reflecting personal experience: the delight he took in the smell of scarlet cloth,<sup>76</sup> in hearing fancy meals described,<sup>77</sup> in showing off his legs when jousting,<sup>78</sup> etc. His reluctance to describe his sexual

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<sup>69</sup> *LSM*, p. 14, line 14-18.

<sup>70</sup> Curtius, *loc. cit.*

<sup>71</sup> Keen, *English Society*, p. 285.

<sup>72</sup> Fowler, *op. cit.*, p. 49.

<sup>73</sup> For the confidential nature of confession and the moral issues this raised, see A. Murray, 'Confession as a Historical Source in the Thirteenth Century', in Davis, R.H.C. and J.M. Wallace-Hadrill (eds.), *The Writing of History in the Middle Ages. Essays Presented to Richard William Southern* (Oxford, 1981), pp. 281-285.

<sup>74</sup> Ackerman, *op. cit.*, pp. 116-117.

<sup>75</sup> *LSM*, pp. 22-23, esp. p. 22, lines 19-24; p. 23, lines 6-11. For comparisons, see the examples cited in M.F. Braswell, *The Medieval Sinner: Characterization and Confession in the Literature of the English Middle Ages* (Rutherford, 1983), pp. 72-77.

<sup>76</sup> *LSM*, p. 47, lines 8-11.

<sup>77</sup> *LSM*, p. 48, lines 6-7.

<sup>78</sup> *LSM*, p. 77, line 27-28.

misdeemeanours suggests, if nothing else, that he claimed the sins he described as his own. He made no real effort to disguise his identity, stating the book was written by 'a foolish, miserable sinner called ertsacnal edcud irneh' (ie. 'Henri duc de Lancastre' spelt backwards),<sup>79</sup> a standard authorial device.<sup>80</sup> Periodic remarks that God had granted him 'much more than many of my fellows' appear personal rather than generic statements.<sup>81</sup> Given the strongly conventional nature of parts of the work, the safest assumption may be that Grosmont selected from an existing repertoire of sins those that fitted his own life, then reiterated them.

Another contemporary trend observable in Grosmont is the new focus on Christ's humanity.<sup>82</sup> Self-lacerating comments about his mistreatment of the poor are frequent in his *Seyntz Medicines*: he has resented giving them leftover food after feasts, taken their property, recoiled from beggars, etc.<sup>83</sup> The Bible held that the poor were Christ's proxies: people would be judged by how they had treated their neighbours during life. Such thinking motivated charitable actions such as Grosmont's religious college and leprosarium.<sup>84</sup> Grosmont helped establish Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, sponsoring two charitable confraternities out of which

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<sup>79</sup> 'un fole cheitif peccheour qe l'en apelle ertsacnal edcud irneh': *LSM*, p. 244, lines 9-10.

<sup>80</sup> For examples in chronicle writing, see R.J. Moll, 'The *Scalacronica* of Sir Thomas Gray of Heton', in Moll, R.J., *Before Malory. Reading Arthur in Later Medieval England* (Toronto, Buffalo and London, 2003), p. 37; G.H. Martin, 'Introduction', in Martin, G.H. (ed.), *Knighton's Chronicle 1337-1396* (Oxford 1995), p. xvii.

<sup>81</sup> 'J'ai mult plus a ma part qe tout pleyn de mes veisyns': *LSM* p. 47, lines 1-2. See particularly an extended passage: p. 1, line 12-p. 2, line 7. See also p. 116, lines 1-5.

<sup>82</sup> See, for a discussion, Keen, *English Society*, pp. 284-285.

<sup>83</sup> For food, *LSM*, p. 48, lines 19-24. For property, *ibid.*, p. 18 line 9-12; p. 44, lines 5-9. For beggars, *ibid.*, p. 14, lines 7-12; p. 19, lines 1-2.

<sup>84</sup> Keen, *English Society*, pp. 282-284.

it grew: the guilds of Corpus Christi and the Blessed Virgin Mary.<sup>85</sup> Such fraternities assisted the poor by ensuring burials, masses for their souls after death, etc.<sup>86</sup> Capgrave mentions his assistance to widows and paupers.<sup>87</sup>

Grosmont's book likewise emphasised Christ's bodily nature.<sup>88</sup> Medieval people were exhorted to visualize Christ's Passion when praying. This 'affective meditation' promoted emotional involvement in His sufferings.<sup>89</sup> When considering Christ's agony on the Cross the *Seyntz Medicines* becomes perceptibly more impassioned:

"That holiest and most precious blood that ran from your sweetest ears, which were full of the most blessed blood, that flowed down your saintly head from the grievous points of the sharp crown that had been placed on your head, sweetest Lord, so sharply and roughly and so hard that the sharp spines penetrated deeply into your head."<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> Fowler, *op. cit.*, p. 188. Arnould, 'Henry of Lancaster', p. 363. *CPR* 1358-61, pp. 275-276 (25 Aug. 1359).

<sup>86</sup> Keen, *English Society*, pp. 274-275.

<sup>87</sup> Capgrave, *op. cit.*, p. 163.

<sup>88</sup> Keen, *English Society*, pp. 284-285.

<sup>89</sup> M.V. Hennessy, 'Passion Devotion, Penitential Reading, and the Manuscript Page: "The Hours of the Cross" in London, British Library Additional 37049', *Mediaeval Studies*, 66 (2004), pp. 212-216. For contemporary advice on this matter, see *Meditationes*, cited in G.R. Keiser, 'Middle English Passion Narratives and their Contemporary Readers: The Vernacular Progeny of *Meditationes Vitae Christi*', in Hogg, J. (ed.), *The Mystical Tradition and the Carthusians. Analecta Cartusiana 130* (Salzburg, 1996), p. 91.

<sup>90</sup> 'Cel treseint et precious sank qe vous corust outre les orailles si tresdouce, et pardedeinz feurent toutes pleins de le tresbenoit sank qi vient raiant contre vaal de la seinte teste par les greves poyntes de la poignante corone qe sur le benoit chief vous estoit, tresdouce Sires, myse moelt asprement et moelt rudement et si fort qe les dures espines vous entreront moelt profond en la teste': *LSM*, p. 172, lines 22-29.

Describing Christ's Passion, Grosmont's narrative periodically features an error that apparently reflects the new focus on Christ's bodily nature. 'Sweet Lord' is spelled *douce Sire* rather than *douz Sire*: the adjective is feminine when it should be masculine.<sup>91</sup> Gender errors were frequent in Anglo-Norman.<sup>92</sup> However, Grosmont's French has been praised as 'consistent and comparatively correct'.<sup>93</sup> Moreover, this particular error has a clustered, not random, distribution. One context in which it manifests is in circumstances in which the gender roles played by Christ (or his mother Mary) diverge from their actual genders. Grosmont imagines Mary, for instance, reconciling God and humanity, as a man brokering a truce, a masculine role.<sup>94</sup> He addresses her with the masculine adjective: *douz Dame*.<sup>95</sup> Asking Christ to bandage his wounds, Grosmont calls Him *douce Sire*, then remarks that Mary, a woman, would make a more appropriate nurse and redirects his request to her.<sup>96</sup> In such cases, the adjective seems to respond to the gender role rather than the noun gender.<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>91</sup> See, for example, note 90 above: 'tresdouce Sires, etc.'

<sup>92</sup> D.A. Kibbee, 'Emigrant Languages and Acculturation: The Case of Anglo-French', in H.F. Nielsen and L. Schøsler (eds.), *The Origins and Development of Emigrant Languages Proceedings from the Second Rasmus Rask Colloquium, Odense University, November 1994* (Odense, 1996), p. 10.

<sup>93</sup> Arnould, 'Henry of Lancaster', p. 386; R.M.T. Hill, 'A Soldier's Devotions', *Studies in Church History*, 17 (1981), p. 179.

<sup>94</sup> *LSM*, p. 126, line 15–p. 128, line 4. As Grosmont wrote, Cardinal Guy of Boulogne was brokering a deal between France and England: Fowler, *op. cit.*, pp. 128–129; E. Perroy, 'Quatre lettres du cardinal Guy de Boulogne (1352–1354)', *Revue du Nord*, 36 (1954), pp. 62–72.

<sup>95</sup> *LSM*, p. 126, lines 28 and 31.

<sup>96</sup> *LSM*, p. 207, lines 1–22. For the errors, lines 9 and 16–17. For Grosmont's remarks on Mary, lines 15–16. For the relative merits of male and female nurses, see: p. 233, lines 10–14.

<sup>97</sup> For another case of the phenomenon, see Chandos Herald, *Le Prince Noir. Poème du héraut d'armes Chandos. Texte critique suivi de notes*, ed. Francisque-Michel (London and Paris, 1883). <<http://gallica.bnf.fr/>> [accessed 05/02/2007], p. 54, line 821, where the feminine form *douce* is applied to an excessively tearful Cardinal. For the Cardinal's tears, see p. 53, line 809; p. 56, line 856.

Medieval people seem to have envisaged gender more in terms of roles and less in terms of anatomy than moderns.<sup>98</sup> Christ crucified was sometimes seen in maternal terms, his blood as nutritive milk.<sup>99</sup> *Douce Sire* occurs persistently when Grosmont describes Christ's agony on the Cross.<sup>100</sup> If these mistakes represent 'Freudian slips' they suggest the concept of 'Jesus as mother' had been internalized.

It should be noted, however, that, while Grosmont handwrote the *Livre*, only scribal copies survive. The authorship of the mistakes is unknown. Conclusions about their significance must be tentative.

The *Livre* also reflects contemporary debate about grace.<sup>101</sup> Should one rely on divine goodwill or 'strive for salvation'?<sup>102</sup> Grosmont imagined his sinful state in two ways. He was actively sinful, a treacherous vassal who had deserted his liege, but also

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<sup>98</sup> The important work in this field is T. Laqueur, *Making Sex. Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud* (Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, England, 1990). For an oft-cited application of Laqueur's principles to medieval literature, see C.J. Clover, 'Regardless of Sex: Men, Women, and Power in Early Northern Europe', *Speculum*, 68 (1993), pp. 363-387.

<sup>99</sup> For the essential work on Christ's femininity, see Bynum: C.W. Bynum, 'Jesus as Mother and Abbot as Mother: Some Themes in Twelfth-Century Cistercian Writing', in Bynum, C.W., *Jesus as Mother. Studies in the Spirituality of the High Middle Ages* (Berkeley, 1982), pp. 129-134; *eadem*, "...And Woman His Humanity": Female Imagery in the Religious Writing of the Later Middle Ages', in Bynum, C.W., *Fragmentation and Redemption. Essays on Gender and the Human Body in Medieval Religion* (New York, 1992), pp. 157-162. For an alternate, ahistorical reading of depictions of Christ as feminine, see: R. Mills, 'Ecce Homo', in Riches, S.J.E. and S. Salih (eds.), *Gender and Holiness. Men, women and saints in late medieval Europe* (London, 2002), 152-173.

<sup>100</sup> *LSM*, p. 95, lines 23-31 [account of the Passion written on Good Friday]; p. 140, lines 12-15 [the Virgin's tears on seeing Christ's hands nailed to the Cross]; p. 141; lines 14-20 [her tears on seeing nails driven through His feet]; p. 172, line 19 – p. 173, line 2 [blood from the Crown of Thorns running into His ears]; p. 182, lines 14-20 [nails are driven into His hands]; p. 183, lines 4-13 [His feet are nailed to the Cross]; p. 195, lines 20-28 [His agony on the Cross]; p. 202, lines 17-19 [blood flows as the 'lance' is driven into His side]. These comprise almost every instance in which Grosmont describes Christ's Passion.

<sup>101</sup> J. Catto, 'Currents of Religious Thought and Expression', in Jones, M. (ed.), *The New Cambridge Medieval History VI, c. 1300-c. 1415* (Cambridge, 2000), p. 53.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*



utterly passive, a sick man infected by sin, dependent on his doctor's 'holy medicines'. The second allegory dominates the *Livre*, occupying all but the prologue. Part two consists of direct demands for divine assistance – allegorical bandages, chicken soup, rosewater, etc.<sup>103</sup> – in other words, God's grace.<sup>104</sup>

However, Grosmont's religious activities (crusades, arranging prayers for his soul, charitable works, etc.) suggest he did not depend on grace for salvation. His book implored God's grace; his acts aimed to achieve salvation by other means. Prayers and actions reflected different aspects of his faith.

## Social Context

If Grosmont's personal faith reflected concerns about the state of his soul, it also had a social context. How did it compare with the beliefs and practices of other people?

The *Seyntz Medicines* is often characterized as 'in-between': midway between didactic and mystical writings, etc.<sup>105</sup> The opinions it expresses were not necessarily unique, however. No other devotional work by an English nobleman has survived. How did other noblemen compare?

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<sup>103</sup> For bandages, *LSM*, pp. 211-213; for chicken soup, pp. 194-195; for rosewater, pp. 148-149.

<sup>104</sup> For studies of the everyday senses of the word *grace* in fourteenth-century French, as opposed to its theological niceties, see J. Picoche, 'La "grace" et la "merci"', *Cahiers de lexicologie*, 50 (1987), pp. 191-199; *idem*, 'La grâce, hier et aujourd'hui', in *De Plume d'oie à l'ordinateur. Études de philologie et de linguistique offertes à Hélène Naïs* (Nancy, 1985), pp. 134-139. The first article is of particular use in regard to Grosmont, who appears to have had a layman's conception of grace.

<sup>105</sup> Pantin, *op. cit.*, p. 233; Arnould, 'Henry of Lancaster', p. 354; W.M. Ormrod, 'The Personal Religion of Edward III', *Speculum*, 64 (1989), p. 853.

Edward III was one of the people closest to Grosmont in terms of social station. Ormrod contrasts Edward's 'utterly conventional and predictable' religious identity with Grosmont's 'quasi-mystic' religion.<sup>106</sup> Nonetheless, their religious behaviour had both similar and dissimilar elements. As Grosmont's book and acts reflect different concerns, caution is needed when judging Edward, who wrote no book, solely by his actions.

Edward's and Grosmont's actions are broadly similar. Edward took the forms of religion seriously, attending mass daily;<sup>107</sup> remarks of Grosmont's suggest he did likewise.<sup>108</sup> Both were interested in relics.<sup>109</sup> Ormrod suggests that Edward 'had a strong belief in candlepower as an antidote to sin': he seemingly believed a lot of light at his funeral would help.<sup>110</sup> This calculating approach was not unlike Grosmont's concern with the amount of prayer he was to receive daily. Grosmont's will and the statutes of St Mary Newarke both dwell on candles, torches and lights.<sup>111</sup>

If his religious style resembled Grosmont's, Edward's substance seems to have differed. Whereas Grosmont wrote a religious book, Edward tended to give away books presented to him.<sup>112</sup> He never went on crusade or pilgrimage.<sup>113</sup> Rather than procure an indulgence by visiting Rome during the 1350 jubilee, he

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<sup>106</sup> Ormrod, *loc. cit.* For descriptions of 'conventional' religious practice, see Keen, *English Society*, pp. 72-79.

<sup>107</sup> Ormrod, *op. cit.*, p. 850.

<sup>108</sup> *LSM*, p. 10, line 21-26.

<sup>109</sup> For Edward, see Ormrod, *op. cit.*, p. 855; for Grosmont, see *LSM*, p. 11, lines 20-22; Fowler, *op. cit.*, p. 109.

<sup>110</sup> Ormrod, *op. cit.*, p. 854. For the nobility in general, see Keen, *English Society*, p. 279-280.

<sup>111</sup> Henry of Grosmont, *Will*, p. 37-38; *Statutes*, pp. 65-66, statute 53a.

<sup>112</sup> Ormrod, *op. cit.*, p. 857.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 860.

bought one from the Pope.<sup>114</sup> These suggest a less ingrained piety than Grosmont's.

If Edward's piety was orthodox, Grosmont's is sometimes called mystical.<sup>115</sup> This aligns him with individuals such as Richard Rolle, his 'almost exact contemporary'.<sup>116</sup> English mystics experienced a close communion with Christ, identifying strongly with His humanity and bodily nature.<sup>117</sup> Grosmont's text has similarities, becoming perceptibly moved by Christ's passion and emphasizing his bodily aspect.<sup>118</sup>

English mystics, however, were not noblemen. Grosmont's social position seems to have interfered with his mystic tendencies. Paradoxically, whereas the lowborn mystics experienced a close, equal relationship with Christ, Grosmont adopted an abject attitude, imagining himself a vassal or a poor man addressing his doctor or lord.<sup>119</sup> *Meistre*, his word for doctor, also means master.<sup>120</sup> In short, his religion had a hierarchical structure consonant with the social order of the day.

Christ's humility posed difficulties for Grosmont. He attempted to account for it, imagining Him a child lord to whom

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<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 860; F. Michaud, 'La peste, la peur et l'espoir. Le pèlerinage jubilaire de romeux marseillais en 1350', *Le Moyen Age: Revue d'histoire et de philologie*, 104 (1998), pp. 422-423, note 106.

<sup>115</sup> Pantin, *loc. cit.*; Ormrod, *op. cit.*, p. 853.

<sup>116</sup> Pantin, *loc. cit.*

<sup>117</sup> The English mystics are hard to define or delimit. For discussions of this problem see: T.W. Coleman, *English Mystics of the Fourteenth Century* (London, 1938), pp. 11-14; G. Bullett, *The English Mystics* (London, 1950), pp. 13-18. For an account that questions the worth of the category: N. Watson, 'The Middle English Mystics', in Wallace, D. (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Medieval English Literature* (Cambridge, 1999), pp. 539-565, esp. 539-540, 564-565.

<sup>118</sup> See citation on pp. 63-64 above.

<sup>119</sup> For Grosmont as a vassal, *LSM*, pp. 1-7; for a poor man and his doctor, pp. 7-8; for a poor man and his lord, pp. 98-103.

<sup>120</sup> For *meistre* meaning doctor, see, for example, *LSM*, p. 7, line 15 *et passim*; for *meistre* meaning master, p. 52, line 21.

the rules of deference did not apply.<sup>121</sup> Christ's approachability was also a problem. His own valets, he noted, trembled when they had offended him. He, however, could boldly march up to Christ 'all bloody' and demand forgiveness.<sup>122</sup> Interestingly, he gets his adjective genders wrong most frequently when making requests of Christ.<sup>123</sup> In secular terms, such requests for favours, or grace, from a superior were thought presumptuous.<sup>124</sup> When making requests he often emphasizes his own humility.<sup>125</sup> Another context for the errors is in descriptions of Christ's humility. The matter of the *Seyntz Medicines* suggests that Christ's humble, approachable and forgiving nature caused problems for Grosmont's notion of him as a lord; its errors seem to echo the same problems.

If Christ's humility presented problems for Grosmont it did not for Richard Rolle. Christ, for Grosmont, was a difficult role-model: pride was considered a peculiarly aristocratic sin.<sup>126</sup> For Rolle, Christ's humility possibly had a levelling effect. Although, like Grosmont, he addresses Christ as 'swete Lord', he more commonly says 'swete Ihesu', which masks their social disparity. In the first two pages of his *Meditation B* on Christ's Passion, for instance, Rolle addresses Christ 16 times as 'Lord' and four times as 'swete Ihesu'. By the next two pages, however, the situation has reversed: 'Lord' five times, 'swete Ihesu' 32 times. This continues for

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<sup>121</sup> *LSM*, p. 34, lines 1-21; p. 37, lines 7-19.

<sup>122</sup> *LSM*, p. 11, line 25-p. 12, line 1.

<sup>123</sup> *LSM*, p. 73, lines 12-18; p. 75, lines 16-24; p. 95, lines 23-31; p. 99, lines 1-17; p. 129, lines 19-23; p. 130, lines 1-7; p. 163, lines 24-29; p. 170, lines 11-15; p. 171, lines 19-23; p. 207, lines 9-18; p. 209, lines 6-13; p. 210, lines 27-31; p. 234, lines 9-17; p. 235, lines 10-13; p. 235, lines 21-26; p. 236, lines 8-11; p. 237, lines 9-10; p. 237, lines 11-23; p. 238, lines 1-7; p. 242, lines 16-28.

<sup>124</sup> Picoche, 'La 'grace' et la 'merci'', p. 195.

<sup>125</sup> *LSM*, p. 99, lines 1-7; *ibid.*, p. 172, lines 19-23 *et passim*.

<sup>126</sup> M.F. Braswell, 'Sin, the Lady, and the Law. The English Noblewoman in the Late Middle Ages', *Medievalia et Humanistica*, n.s. 14 (1986), p. 82.

the rest of the work. Rolle apparently rapidly lost his sense of Christ's lordship. Grosmont, however, never did, using, if not Lord, then Master or Seigneur.<sup>127</sup>

Similarly, while the English mystics used *thou*,<sup>128</sup> Grosmont addressed Christ as *vous* (the French *you*), as did aristocrats in Froissart and in Chandos Herald's life of the Black Prince.<sup>129</sup> Fourteenth-century people addressed superiors as *you*, inferiors as *thou*. Aristocrats called their equals *you*; lesser individuals used *thou*. This usage was relatively recent. Once everyone had been called *thou*. In the twelfth century, however, as a mark of respect, people began to address superiors in the plural.<sup>130</sup> Church Latin, however, continued addressing God as *thou*. Consequently, vernacular writers had two precedents when addressing God: the traditional Latin usage (*thou*); the secular, vernacular form (*you*).

Grosmont, who can have said *thou* only to inferiors, called Christ *you*. This was ambiguous: it could have denoted Grosmont's equality or inferiority. However, the context indicates an unequal relationship. Choosing to address Christ as though a typical medieval lord seemingly locked Grosmont into a subordinate role. Rolle followed the Latin precedent. This forced him into a

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<sup>127</sup> Richard Rolle. *Prose and Verse. Edited from MS Longleat 29 and related manuscripts. Early English Text Society no. 293*, ed. S.J. Ogilvie-Thomson (Oxford, 1988), pp. 69-83.

<sup>128</sup> See, for instance, Rolle, *loc. cit.* This is typical of English mystical writing in this respect.

<sup>129</sup> For Grosmont, see *LSM, passim*. For the Black Prince, see Chandos Herald, *op. cit.*, p. 84, line 1262–p.85, line 1272; p. 140, line 2069–p. 141, line 2070. For Froissart, see R. Brown and A. Gilman, 'The Pronouns of Power and Solidarity', in Sebeok, T.A. (ed.), *Style in Language* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1960), p. 256.

<sup>130</sup> See Brown and Gilman, *op. cit.*, pp. 255-257. This is the classic article on modes of address in European languages. Although Brown and Gilman's interpretation has fallen out of favour, the facts presented here are not disputed. For a reappraisal offering qualified support, see B. Peeters, 'Tu ou vous?', *Zeitschrift für Französische Sprache und Literatur*, 114 (2004), pp. 1-17. For a treatment of the situation in fifteenth-century French, see P. Mason, 'The Pronouns of Address in Middle French', *Studia Neophilologica*, 62 (1990), pp. 95-100.

relationship outside secular norms. *Thou* made Christ an atypical Lord with whom ordinary people could converse on terms of equality.

Perhaps this permitted the mystics their mystic unions with Christ while creating barriers between Grosmont and God. When Rolle describes Christ's Passion he uses intimate, almost eroticized, language: 'lufe makes me hardy hym to call that I best lufe, that... he me comforthand & filland myght kys me with kyssynge of hys mouth...'<sup>131</sup> Grosmont remains formal. His *Livre* evinces perceptible emotion. He sometimes calls Christ *douce Sire*. Distance is nonetheless maintained.<sup>132</sup> Despite his mystic tendencies, his rank conditioned a relationship with God that hindered their full expression.

The evidence available suggests that, while the survival of Grosmont's book perhaps creates a somewhat exaggerated idea of his difference from noblemen who wrote no books, he was nonetheless somewhat atypical. Other aristocrats, Walter de Mauny for one, requested low-key funerals,<sup>133</sup> but not all can have worn hair-shirts. Gray's remark about the strictness of Grosmont's devotion and its development 'before his death'<sup>134</sup> seem justified.

The apparent first manifestation of this piety around 1348 may mean that the Black Death played a role in sparking it. However, since aristocrats tended to become more pious as death approached, it should not be held solely responsible. References in

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<sup>131</sup> Rolle's *Incendium Amoris*, cited by Mills, *op. cit.*, p. 158.

<sup>132</sup> See example at pp. 63-64, note 90 above.

<sup>133</sup> *DNB* 37, p. 448.

<sup>134</sup> Gray, cited in Arnould, 'Henry of Lancaster', p. 364, note 1.

Grosmont's book to sudden, horrible death are suggestive, though. A well-travelled man, he was perhaps better placed than most to see the full effects of plague's devastation. His journey to Prussia, for instance, followed hot on the heels of the Black Death there.<sup>135</sup> This was initially interpreted as a one-off instance of divine wrath. Since Grosmont died during the 'Second Plague', he never became accustomed to plague as a fact of life, as would later generations.<sup>136</sup> Perhaps in 1361 he died of fright.

There are few signs in Grosmont's youth of his later religiosity. His Spanish crusade, in the days when he was allegedly keen on everything about arms, perhaps reflects his interest in chivalry rather than religion. Edmund Plantagenet's piety consisted primarily of constant readiness to go crusading.<sup>137</sup> Grosmont's may have been similar. His sister Isabella, abbess of Amesbury, lived very much the life of a lay noblewoman.<sup>138</sup> Perhaps Grosmont's youthful piety was more latent than active.

While, as remarked, his pious actions in many ways resemble Edward III's, the hair-shirt suggests they were perhaps more deeply felt. However, rank seems to have cut him off from true mysticism. Grosmont envisaged God in hierarchical terms that mirrored the temporal feudal system. Rolle and the mystics were on a more intimate footing with Christ. However, if not himself fully mystic, he possibly exemplifies the 'mixed life' described by Walter Hilton,

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<sup>135</sup> For Grosmont's journey, Fowler, *op. cit.*, pp. 105-106. For the Plague's movements, see O.J. Benedictow, *The Black Death 1346-1353. The Complete History* (Woodbridge, 2004), pp. 198-202.

<sup>136</sup> Grigsby, *op. cit.*, p. 125.

<sup>137</sup> *DNB* 17, p. 759.

<sup>138</sup> C. Batt, D. Renevey and C. Whitehead, 'Domesticity and Medieval Devotional Literature', *Leeds Studies in English*, 36 (2005), pp. 224-225.

another mystic: the ideal blend of contemplation and action in the life of a devout layman.<sup>139</sup>

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<sup>139</sup> N. Watson, 'The Middle English Mystics', in Wallace, D. (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Medieval English Literature* (Cambridge, 1999), pp. 556-557.



## CONCLUSION

If in some respects a representative English nobleman, Grosmont was also atypical, marked out by his unusual status (a great magnate and minor royal), his cosmopolitan lifestyle and international ties and the vicissitudes of his youth. Was there an acculturation to French cultural norms? Grosmont's French skills appear to reflect his many years in France and consequent familiarity with *francien*. There are hints his chivalric conduct likewise reflects exposure to French attitudes, though we need to be cautious about reading too much into his behaviour.

As Sir Thomas Gray remarked, the things for which he was specially noted were his youthful chivalric prowess and his strict piety in old age. He appears to have taken each to extremes, using them to define himself. Perhaps this connects his eagerness for combat and conspicuous loyalty with his later penitential works and hair-shirt. Both his chivalry and piety involved ostentatious adherence to an ideological code.

If Gray contrasted Grosmont's chivalric and religious sides, in fact things were more complex. Chivalry and religion were intimately linked; equally they were in constant tension.<sup>1</sup> Hence the gulf in Grosmont's case between the heroic figure whose external renown is depicted in chronicles and the introverted character of the *Seyntz Medicines*, whose interest is personal purity. Like *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, the *Seyntz Medicines* reflects the complex relationship of secular and religious values.

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<sup>1</sup> R. Kaeuper, 'The Societal Role of Chivalry in Romance: Northwestern Europe', in Krueger, R.L. (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval Romance* (Cambridge, 2000), p. 105.

Ingledew describes Grosmont as 'caught in two ways of constructing himself', with conflicting chivalric and religious ideologies competing to mould his character.<sup>2</sup> Evidently, religion increasingly won the contest.

Nonetheless, Grosmont's narrative suggests Christ's humble and forgiving nature posed problems for him, even if he commended it. He needed to explain Christ's humility, imagining him a child lord from whom typical lordly behaviour could not be expected. Although he contrasted Christ's approachability favourably with his own stern relationship with his valets, it evidently represented a source of wonder to him. Christ's was unlordly behaviour. Grosmont's secular, chivalric values seem to have had difficulty accepting it.

In this context the text's adjectival errors are suggestive. *Douce Sire* crops up in specific circumstances. If some errors seemingly express confusion about Christ's 'gender role', they also occur when Grosmont describes Christ's humility or demands favours. Such demands, when made of secular lords, were considered presumptuous.<sup>3</sup> Might such errors have reflected an unconscious verdict on Christ's humble behaviour, with unlordly behaviour being judged womanish? One mistake occurs when Grosmont characterizes Christ's redemption of humankind as the act of a lord forced to a shameful peace with his rebellious human vassals.<sup>4</sup> Christ's behaviour, though Grosmont commends its

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<sup>2</sup> F. Ingledew, *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight and the Order of the Garter* (Notre Dame, Indiana, 2006), pp. 199-200.

<sup>3</sup> J. Picoche, 'La grâce et la merci', *Cahiers de lexicologie*, 50 (1987), p. 195.

<sup>4</sup> *LSM*, p. 127, lines 21-24.

humility, would have been a symptom of weakness in a real medieval lord.

For various reasons the text's errors need to be approached very cautiously. However, they appear not to be random and harmonize with the narrative's own concerns. They may warrant further investigation. While Anglo-Norman gender errors have been taken for granted, perhaps these ones express underlying attitudes and might be instructive.

If Grosmont had difficulty reconciling his secular and religious ideas of lordship, he would not be the only one. One sixteenth-century Italian miller, interrogated by the Inquisition for heresy, explained: 'I said that if Jesus Christ was God eternal he should not have allowed himself to be taken and crucified, and I was not certain about this article but had doubts as I have said, because it seemed a strange thing to me that a lord would allow himself to be taken in this way, and so I suspected that since he was crucified he was not God...'<sup>5</sup> Grosmont's narrative, and possibly his textual errors, seem to testify a similar difficulty in accepting Christ's unlordly version of lordship.

Did writing the *Seyntz Medicines* help Grosmont resolve other issues? His persona as a treacherous knight in the prologue, who had abandoned his lord to serve the devil, paralleled his real situation in some respects. Since Grosmont was lord of lands in Champagne and Brie, he was a vassal of France's king as well as England's. In fighting Edward's wars he was rebelling against his French liege. The treaty of Brétigny, which he helped negotiate,

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<sup>5</sup> C. Ginzburg, *The Cheese and the Worms. The Cosmos of a Sixteenth-Century Miller* (London and Henley, 1980), p. 63.

brought peace between France and England. The day it was signed Grosmont did homage to France's king for his French titles, reconciling his dual loyalties. He is believed to have favoured peace for some time.<sup>6</sup> Might the fact of writing have helped resolve political issues, affecting his behaviour? We cannot know.

After Brétigny, Grosmont had nothing left to do but die, which he did on 23 March 1361. Fittingly, perhaps, this was St George's Day, dedicated to the patron of knighthood and England's special protector, plus the Garter's feast day. Given Grosmont's intimate blend of religion and chivalry it seems entirely appropriate.

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<sup>6</sup> K. Fowler, *The King's Lieutenant: Henry of Grosmont, First Duke of Lancaster, 1310-1361* (London, 1969), p. 219.

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*Et uncore sui jeo de trois choses moelt tenuz a mercier nostre Seignur, et ces sont de trois gracez en fésant cest livre: l'une est la grace de la volenté et l'entrepris de comencer; l'autre est la grace et la continuance de l'enoevre; la tierce si est grace de l'espace de vie tantqe a le complisement et la fyn de cest escrit, le quel est ore, Dieux mercy, tout acompli par sa meismes grace. Et qe ceo soit souverainement al honour de la Seinte Trinité, de la benoite Virge et de touz les seintz et seintes de paradis, et en despite, honte et confusion de l'orde diable d'enfern et touz les compaignons et de touz ses affaires, et profit, eide et remission de toutz almes cristienes, et especialment pur ceaux a qi jeo sui plus tenuz de mes amys, et puis pur moy cheitife peccheour. Jeo prie a touz qe cest fyne verront q'il lour plese eider de trois Pater nr. et trois Ave Mariez.*

— Henry of Grosmont, *Livre de Seyntz Medicines*, p. 240.

Finally, I have to offer thanks to Our Lord for three graces: for the will to undertake this book – for the ability to continue it – for a span of life sufficient to complete it. Let it be to the honour of the Holy Trinity, the Blessed Virgin and the Saints, to the confusion of the Devil and his friends, and to the benefit and pardon of all Christian souls, especially those of my friends and my own. Let those who read these last lines say three Paters and three Aves for me.

— Marginal gloss from the Arnould edition.